

**BIG-MATCH
NEWS**

WORLD CHAMPS & MATCH THIS FINAL - FULL REPORTS

AnglingTimes

September 16, 2025 - £2.99

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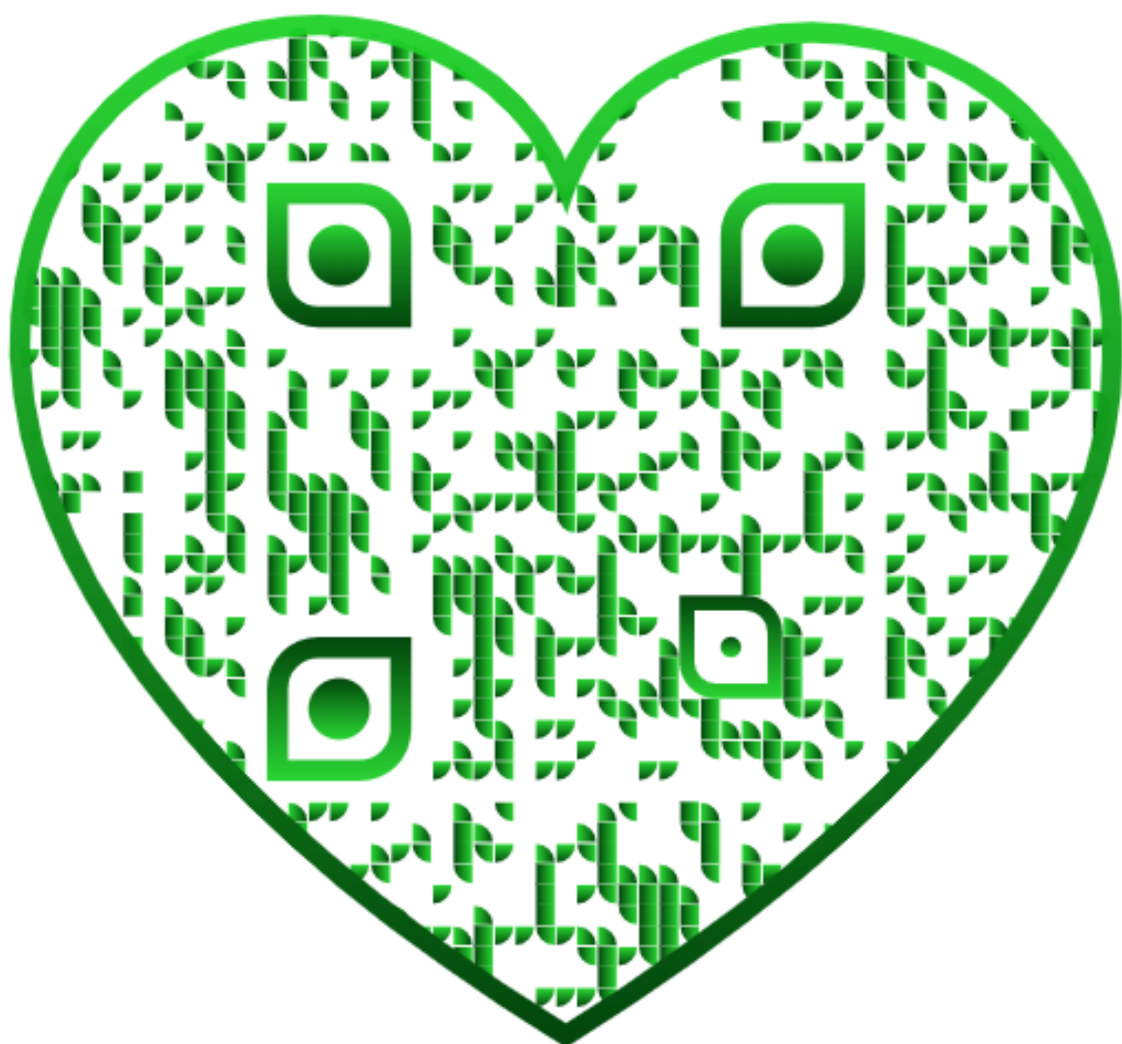
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A legacy left for young anglers

Canal & River Trust is the UK's largest canal charity, caring for 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England and Wales. We often hear how canals have positively impacted people's lives from favourite fishing memories to spotting wildlife with loved ones. Keeping this ageing network alive is vital for future generations and wildlife. Without it, we'd also struggle to continue our Let's Fish programme, which coaches young people to become confident anglers!



Every year, gifts left in Wills to Canal & River Trust fund a range of projects across this 2,000 mile network, and we track where every penny goes. Gifts of all sizes really are keeping canals alive for angling, gongoozling, boating and so much more.

In 2024/25, we were able to make major towpath repairs on the Chesterfield Canal in Worksop thanks to a generous gift. Dating back to 1777, the wall started collapsing into the canal and we then found that it was built with no foundations – this explains why it began to sag. The wall has now been reinforced with modern concrete footings and rebuilt with reclaimed original bricks.

Further down the network, in Ansty

on the Oxford Canal, we made wildlife friendly bank repairs, lined with coconut matting rolls and topped with a soil mix for native wildflowers. Anglers can now continue to fish here without worrying about the towpath being overtopped by the canal, and left in a muddy mess!

Even back in 2023/24, gifts have helped create a better environment for anglers. On the Chesterfield Canal and the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, these generous gifts helped us fight invasive Floating Pennywort – helping native fish thrive on these stretches. It's an ongoing battle against non-native plant species so the support from gifts made a huge difference, enabling us to reduce the threat to fish quickly.

Gifts have also allowed us to design and install a fish screen in Wales on the River Dee. We want to help more endangered eels make their journey safely upstream to grow and thrive and our wonderful supporters have played a major part in supporting their recovery.

These are only a number of projects made possible by gifts in Wills and every year, we produce an impact report detailing the projects that benefit from these gifts. You can also be remembered for even more, like your love of angling. Everyone has different circumstances and capacities to give to charity but even by leaving just 1-2% of your net worth to keep canals alive, you'll leave a lasting legacy for the anglers of the future.

Did you know, you can also write your Will for free?

Through our trusted partners at Farewill and the National Free Wills Network, you can write your simple Will completely free - in-person, online or even over the phone!

To read our legacy impact report or write your Will for free, search 'Canal wills' or email natasha.emerson@canalrivertrust.org.uk

INSIDE THIS WEEK

BRITAIN'S MOST TRUSTED VOICE IN FISHING

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Martin Bowler reveals the five species which should be in your plans this autumn.



ALL CHANGE AS AUTUMN IS UPON US

IT FEELS like a seasonal switch has suddenly been thrown. Almost overnight (although I'm sure it was more gradual in reality) we seem to have gone from long summer days to it being dark by 8pm, with distinctly cooler temperatures.

For many anglers, the onset of autumn is when they start to give some serious thought to dusting off their lure-fishing tackle or stocking up on deadbaits to target predatory species such as pike, perch and zander.

I've already done a few ultra-light lure sessions over the last month or so for small perch on my local river, but I'm looking forward to having a go for some bigger specimens over the coming weeks. Hopefully this will be the year I can finally catch a perch over the 3lb mark!

I've never caught a zander before either,

so that's a shortfall I wouldn't mind trying to rectify too this winter. I've found a couple of venues fairly close by which supposedly hold a few, so I'll try to find the time to fish them.

But until the temperatures really start to drop I think I'm going to attempt to squeeze in a few final carp sessions on my local lake, as it's a beautiful place to fish when the leaves on the surrounding trees start to turn.

There are also one or two absolutely stunning linears in there which I've seen photos of this year, and I'd love to have a go for them.

But, whatever you're fishing for, I think autumn is one of the very best times in the whole angling calendar to be out on the bank. While we may not benefit from the fish's traditional autumn feed-up, as used to be the case, certainly when it comes to carp fishing, the colours and changing landscape alone make being out there more than worthwhile.

James Furness
Editor



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THIS WEEK

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW FROM THE WORLD OF FISHING



ENGLAND PIPPED BY BLEAK-BAGGERS AT THE WORLD CHAMPS

Men's float team finish 5th in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italians take gold

AFTER a tightly-fought event, the England men's float team just missed out on a podium place at this year's World Championships after finishing in 5th place.

The event was held on the 4,000-acre Lake Modrac in Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Mark Downes' side of Will Raison (captain), Sean Ashby,

Cam Hughes, James Dent, Steve Hemingray and Matt Godfrey spent the week prior getting to grips with the vast venue, which is over 500 acres larger than Lake Windermere!

Carassio, skimmers and bleak were the main target species, with England deciding to fish to their strengths and focus primarily on the bigger fish.

In the end it was the nations that fished solely for bleak that prevailed come the final whistle but, had England not been blighted by a few poor pegs, it could have been a different story.

"On eight out of 10 of our pegs over the two days, our approach worked," Mark Downes told us. "However, in two shallow areas the bigger

fish weren't there, and those poor results that cost us.

"Ultimately, it turned into a bleak match, with the nations that catch lots of these fish back home taking the medals."

Italy won overall, but only just, with their 31 points just sneaking ahead of Croatia's 31.5. France claimed third place with 34.5 points.

England's best individual



Tony (left) with part of his historic bream haul!

MEGA BREAM HAUL SETS RIVER RECORD

A MATCH angler weighed in a truly staggering 216lb 10oz of bream last week to set a new match record on Britain's longest river.

Fishing on the Severn at Upton, Tony Moreton landed

44 slabs over five hours to top Dave Harrell's previous match best of 213lb, caught back in 2011.

Tony drew the famous 'Swan Steps', in front of the Swan Hotel, opposite where the old record came from.



Lake Modrac is 500 acres bigger than Windermere!



performer was Cam Hughes, whose four points over the two days fell just short of a medal. "It's not the result we wanted but 5th isn't too bad," said captain Will Raison. "It was a great week with great people, and I'm positive we will get our rewards soon. "Thank you to everyone involved, and a massive thanks to Sensas for their support."

WORLD CHAMPS - TOP 5 TEAMS

- 1st ITALY – 31pts
- 2nd CROATIA – 31.5pts
- 3rd FRANCE – 34.5pts
- 4th HUNGARY – 43pts
- 5th ENGLAND – 45pts

"Looking at the results of club matches in the run-up, it had been fishing quite hard, but I knew that sometimes this area could hold a large shoal of bream," Tony told us.

Kicking off with eight bait-up feeders filled with groundbait and casters, Tony then cast his groundbait feeder and triple maggot hookbait over the top.

"I didn't have a bite for the first half hour, but just 20 minutes after catching the

first one, I had four in the net!"

From then on, Tony added an extra 40 bream, with organiser Colin Harvey rushing along the bank to get him extra keepnets.

"It was my last fish that beat Dave's record!", he added. "Sometimes, the feeder would hit bottom and there would be a fish on right away. If I didn't get a bite in a few minutes, I recast. I'm so chuffed to hold the new River Severn record!"



FIRST BARBEL IS A SIXTEEN-POUNDER!

MANY anglers fish their whole lives without getting their hands on a 15lb-plus barbel, but the very first time that Lee Edmond-Hiett targeted the species, he banked this beautiful fish weighing 16lb 8oz!

What's more, it was caught from the River Itchen – a southern chalk stream with a low stock of large and notoriously challenging barbel.

"The river was low and there were only a handful of fishable swims, so I picked a spot a rod length out under a fallen tree," Lee told us. "After a couple of hours, the rod was nearly pulled in, and what followed was the hardest fight I've ever had from a fish. I'm still buzzing, and I'd urge anyone who hasn't done so to try barbel fishing. You won't regret it!"

FISH A FUNDRAISER FOR ANDY DYSON

TWO major fisheries have arranged fundraising events to support a top match angler who was admitted to intensive care following a serious work accident.

Andy Dyson hit the headlines in 2022 after playing a key part in one of the tightest Fish O'Mania

finals in history, eventually being pipped to the title by less than 1lb.

The Cheshire-based angler continued to fish at the top level until the recent incident, which initially left him fighting for his life although he has now been moved to a recovery ward after his condition improved.

To support Andy and his family, Heronbrook Fisheries will host a 95-peg fundraiser on October 12 before Old Hough Fishery follows suit with a 100-peg contest on October 25.

"Andy is a great angler, but more importantly, he is well-liked by his peers. We just knew we had to do something to help when we heard the news," explained Old Hough boss Melvin Sykes.

● To book on the matches, call the fisheries direct.



NEWS EXCLUSIVE

THE AUTUMN BARBEL BONANZA BEGINS!

Series of specimens landed and huge multiple-fish catches taken as barbel go hard on the feed...

ALTHOUGH they can be caught in summer, for many anglers it's not until the smell of decaying leaves fills the air and the cool winds of autumn blow that the barbel season truly starts.

And, with temperatures dropping and much-needed rain falling over recent weeks, the species has been hard on the feed in rivers up and down the country. During that time, we've seen the biggest of the season so far being banked, plus a handful of other huge specimens landed from challenging rivers.

It's not just been individual fish reported either, because some truly sensational catches have been made by anglers who have landed hundreds of pounds of barbel in a single session.

GIANTS GET THEIR HEADS DOWN!

Kicking things off was Cambridgeshire big-fish ace Julian Barnes, who caught the heaviest barbel reported so far this season in the shape of

a 19lb 8oz River Lea giant. What's more, in the same session he landed two other crackers, weighing 17lb 10oz and 13lb 1oz, and the trip closely followed his catch reported in last week's issue of *Angling Times*, in which he landed two other barbel of 17lb 15oz and 16lb 7oz!

"Wanting to make the most of the feeding spell on this very tricky venue, triggered by the change in weather, I hit the banks of Kings Weir again and managed the three other big barbel," Julian told us.

"A combi-rig and jet-black

boilie hookbait did the trick in an up-and-coloured river."

Another to get in on the action was Mark Erdwin, who caught a superb 17lb 7oz fish from the River Loddon.

"With the rivers so low early in the season, I held back from going barbel fishing, but with heavy rains and better temperatures I decided to head out," he told us.

"Soon after casting out a homemade dumbbell hookbait wrapped in paste, I received some good knocks on the tip, but when an otter passed through the swim, my heart sank a bit, as the indications abruptly ceased."

Mark decided to recast, and just 20 minutes later, the clutch on his centrepin reel screamed into action.

"An intense game of hit and hold began, with me not wanting to give an inch of line," Mark revealed.

"After a dogged scrap, it eventually slipped it into the net, and as I peered into the mesh, I was lost for words.

"Uniquely, the fish had some of the longest barbules I've seen, with little forks to them."

CATCHING BY NUMBERS...

It wasn't just odd big fish on the feed, as one group of anglers landed a staggering 117 barbel between them on an unforgettable two-day trip! Mickey Palmer, Darren Otway and Ellis Titheridge were fishing the renowned Collingham Weir on the River Trent when they took the mega haul, which included specimens to 15lb 8oz.

"I knew this would be my last barbel session here, so I was hopeful of a farewell to remember, but I didn't expect things to unfold as they did," Mickey told us.

"The first day went well, with us catching 41 barbel between us, and as you can only fish through the daylight hours at Collingham we chatted that night and went into the second day with a definite plan of action."

Fishing two 8mm Robin Red



"At one point, I was casting out and getting bites within 30 seconds!"



Julian's 19lb 8oz barbel – one of the River Lea giants.



Darren Otway's 14lb 1oz barbel – one of 117 caught in the session!

pellets, the three anglers enjoyed non-stop action.

"At one point, I was casting out and getting bites within 30 seconds of the bait hitting the riverbed – it was sensational fishing," Mickey told *Angling Times*.

"We ended up with another 76 barbel, bringing our total to 117 over the two days."

Also enjoying the River Trent's thriving stocks of barbel was Cambridgeshire angler Nigel Pankhurst who, in a day's fishing, caught 51 barbel for a total weight of 247lb 2oz!

"I managed to bag the swim I wanted and cast into a deep channel, just short of halfway across," he told us.

"After 45 minutes of receiving plucks at my bait from small fish, the rod arched over and the reel screamed.

"I picked it up to feel the unmistakable power of a Trent barbel, and that fish was the first of what turned out to be an exceptional day."

Fishing an 8mm pellet hookbait and feeding 2mm, 4mm and 6mm pellets in a feeder with some damp groundbait, Nigel landed a steady stream of fish between 1lb and 9lb, with most of them in the 4lb-6lb bracket.

"I started the day fishing with two rods, but one was soon chucked up the bank! I've never heard of such a catch," Nigel added.



HUGHES' VIEWS

TV STAR AND CARP MATCH LEGEND LOOKS AT FISHING'S HOT TOPICS

WHAT'S YOUR 'WHY'?

WE ALL DO stuff for a reason – whether that's out of necessity, obligation, need or desire – and, for many anglers, all four of these reasons can apply.

Now, I accept that angling may not be a necessity in the same way that earning a crust or paying the bills are, but there are occasions when it sits so high up the priority list that it's got more of a pull than anything else.

There are times you want to go fishing, times when you need to go fishing, and there are also times when you just have to go fishing. I'm there at the moment. Regular readers will know that this summer has not been an angling one for me. It's been more about family and events.

I've not really given it much of a thought other than going now and again because 'it's what I do', but something recently has totally changed that.

Maybe it's the cooler weather. Maybe life has calmed down a little. Or maybe life's monotonous 'in-tray of doom' has been cleared sufficiently to free space in my mind.

Like many of you, I've been involved in all sorts of sports and pastimes over the years. They've all been great fun, yet they come and go. But for some deeply ingrained reason angling never goes away.

Is it the need to catch a fish?

To escape life? To spend time alone, or even to spend time socialising with like-minded mates? Beautiful dawns, awesome sunsets, drinking in the scenery and sounds. The thrill of the bite and the fight. The feeling of reward in the quiet aftermath of success. We all go for a reason. What's yours?

"For some deeply ingrained reason angling never goes away..."



YOUR TOP CATCHES

THE BEST FISH YOU'VE LANDED THIS WEEK



"HER MUM WOULD BE VERY PROUD"

Brad and Amelia Asbury – 5lb tench

"A COUPLE of years ago my daughter's mother sadly passed away and I took a break from fishing – and most things in life, to be honest. But recently I've started to take two-year-old Amelia on to the bank, and she loves it!

"It's beautiful to see her engaged in my hobby and appreciative of the outdoors. Her mum, Megan, would often come fishing with me, and I think she'd be very proud.

"I have one photo with a 20lb carp, including all three of us together, taken when Megan surprised me at the lake with baby Amelia, and the alarm went off while they were there!

"Recently, I've taken Amelia on to lakes, and on a recent trip we had seven tench, the best being this five-pounder.

"She's very interactive, and has no hesitation in touching them!"



"I WASN'T READY FOR THIS!"

Martin Stone – 2lb 15oz rudd

"I WAS recently lucky to join a friend on the Great Ouse for a day of rudd fishing.

"I knew the stretch could produce giants, but I wasn't ready for the fish that was about to grace my net!

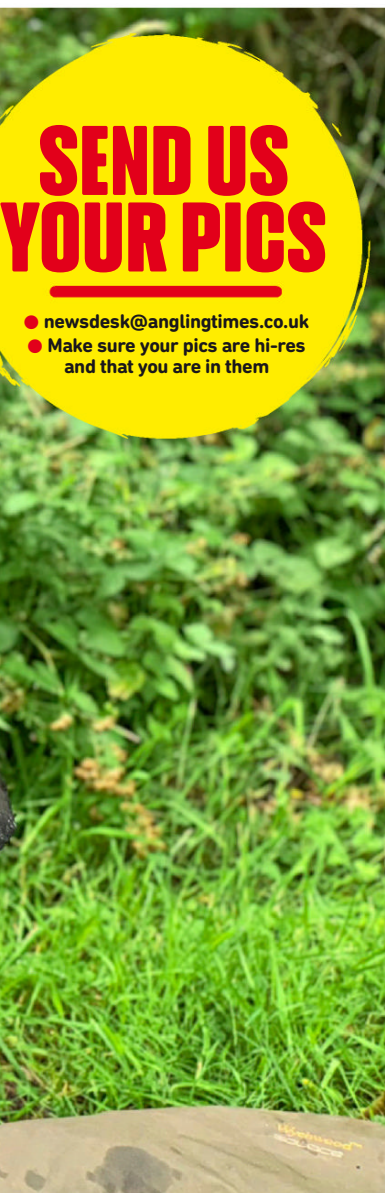
"We experienced a mixture of sunshine and rain throughout the day, and I was fortunate enough to catch this 2lb 15oz rudd.

"It's my new personal best, and was caught alongside a few others weighing over 2lb.

"I've always loved fishing for rudd, but catching these has made me fall even more in love with the species!

"My angling life began when I was 10 years old and, although I'm now 45, I never thought I'd catch something like this."

Martin's top tip: Sweetcorn is a brilliant bait for big rudd, yet rarely used these days. I had this fish on it, fished under a float.



"A NEW PB AND A LAKE RECORD!"

Tracy Hoyland – 39lb 14oz carp

"WITH temperatures dropping, air pressure stabilising and fresh winds arriving, my partner and I arrived at Blackthorn Fishery full of expectation.

"I'd hoped for a good session, but after landing only an 18lb common in four days, while my partner had four good carp, it was time to up my game.

"I tied on a new rig, cast to the far margin and, eventually, off went the rod.

"Having landed the fish, it wasn't until it lay in the cradle that I realised just how big it was, and at 39lb 14oz, it's a new PB and lake record. All my dreams came true!"



Tracy's top tip: I regularly topped up with particles over my rod, which resulted in a change in my fortunes.



"I'VE FISHED THE POND FOR YEARS"

Robert McCrudden – 20lb 4oz sturgeon

"ONE of my local fisheries is Aston Park, in Sheffield.

"I had fished Lily Pond there for many years, hoping to catch one of the bigger resident carp.

"I had always been told there were sturgeon in there, too, but I hadn't caught one of these enigmatic fish until the other day, when I managed to bank this one, weighing 20lb 4oz.

"I hooked it on an inline lead set-up, fished in a PVA bag with a 12mm pink waffer. It put up a good fight, and took me a while to net!"

"I HOPE HIS OBSESSION CONTINUES!"

Peter and Theo Walker – 10lb barbel

"ME and my five-year-old son, Theo, have been fishing the middle Severn over the last few weeks, trying to catch his first barbel.

"The other night we achieved it with two lovely fish of 9lb and 10lb. He has really taken to fishing, and does overnight sessions too!

"On this particular trip, he also landed eight chub and a pike. But the barbel were the highlight. Theo did a great job, and managed to steer them in for me to net. Hopefully, his obsession continues!"



Theo's top tip:

I caught these on 10mm Robin Red hookable pellets, fished on a size 14 wide gape hook. Try them!



Albert's top tip: Deeper holes are great spots to try for predators. If you find one, make sure to have a cast there!

"HIS KNEES TURNED TO JELLY!"

Albert and Lee Grant – 3lb 1oz perch

"WHILE fishing the Thames near Henley, my 10-year-old son Albert landed this 3lb 1oz perch on a livebait.

"He'd lowered it under the rod-tip into an 18ft-deep hole created by a bomb during the war!

"After he got the take, he hit into a fish that fought well, and we reckoned it must've been a perch, judging by its head shakes. Even so, Albert's knees turned to jelly when it surfaced!"



THE GAME CHANGER

AnglingTimes
DRENNAN CUP
CATCHES OF
THE WEEK
2025 - 2026 SEASON

"SCALING DOWN AND USING SMALL BAITS PRODUCED THE BARBEL OF A LIFETIME!"

Connor Bell – 15lb 4oz barbel

"OVER the last three years I've been trying to catch a big barbel from the River Dee, and on a recent session I landed just such a fish – this 15lb 4oz specimen, which is, to my knowledge, the biggest ever caught from the river.

"With the waterway running low

and clear, scaling down and being as quiet as possible on the bank was the key to my success.

"Arriving at 5pm after work, I decided to target an area of turbulent, deeper water, where I felt sure the fish would be holding up in the low levels.

"Rather than rushing to cast

out, I sat and fed for an hour with the catapult. Noisy swimfeeders and bait droppers have no place in such clear, low conditions and, in my opinion, a regular trickle of pellets is a far better option.

"I then rigged up a 21g bomb, just heavy enough to hold bottom, on a scaled-down set-up, using 8lb mainline, a 5ft hooklink of 7lb fluorocarbon, and a size 14 wide gape specialist hook.

"While that arrangement may seem light by today's barbel fishing standards, in the conditions I felt a touch of finesse would swing the odds in my favour.

"After an hour of feeding, I clipped on my bomb and punched some 8mm barrels of meat to fish directly on the hook.

"The muggy night air left me feeling breathless, and I just knew something was going to happen. But, I've had three years of feeling like this, and three years of going home with my mission incomplete!

"My first cast hit the mark, and I paid out a small bow of line. Rattles from chub came quickly, and two small fish of around a pound soon followed.

"All the while, I rarely put the catapult down. Bait spread over a



Feed pellets with a catapult to minimise any disturbance.

"I was just loading some more pellets into the pouch when the rod smashed over violently..."

Connor's long and lean 15lb 4oz barbel. What a fish!

CONNOR'S TOP 5 TIPS

Time it right – Rivers can be busy with dog walkers, swimmers and kayakers these days, but I've found that arriving in the evening avoids the crowds.

Try a light lead – While there are times for big feeders and leads, if your river is running low, going as light as possible can pay off.

Give punched meat a go – Meat punches are great bits of kit. They create a streamlined and robust hookbait, different in appearance to the cubes most anglers use.

Tune your drag correctly – Barbel are aggressive fighters, and a poorly set clutch can result in smashed tackle, or a fish running beyond your control.

Use balanced tackle – If you do scale down slightly for barbel, make sure to use a softer rod for balance during the fight. I used a 1.5lb test curve model on this session.

wide area encouraged the fish to drop their guard. In nature, food doesn't arrive in neat piles!

"I was just loading some more pellets into the pouch when the rod smashed over violently, and the fish then led me on what I can only describe as a merry dance – upstream, downstream, all over the stream in fact!

"Once it surfaced, my legs went weak – the sheer length of the fish left me in a speechless mess.

"Immediately I jumped into the river, work clothes still on, and landed it. Its head and tail touched the edges of my 42ins net!

"Once it had been well rested, the scales and weigh sling were calibrated, before revealing the astonishing figure of 15lb 4oz.

"The overall key to success in barbel fishing in low rivers for me is simple – scale down, minimise evidence of your presence, feed frugally, and fish small baits."

AnglingTimes DRENNAN CUP CATCHES OF THE WEEK 2025 - 2026 SEASON



FEEDER TACTICS BRING TRENT TWO-POUNDERS

Martin Abonyi – 2lb 10oz roach

WHILE most big roach from the River Trent are caught by barbel anglers these days, Martin Abonyi has been targeting the species with scaled-down feeder tactics this season, using small pellets on the hook – and with great success, too.

Over the past three weeks he's landed a hat-trick of two-pounders, the biggest being this 2lb 10oz specimen he took on a recent session. The other two redfins scaled 2lb 5oz and 2lb 4oz.

Targeting the river's tidal reaches, Martin has been fishing with a cage feeder packed with Dynamite Baits Halibut and Hemp groundbait plus a few pellets, with an 8mm pellet hookbait on a size 14 Super Specialist hook.

Using a match-style quivertip rod, he's been frequenting a swim where there's an inviting crease in the river.

Regular casts of his dry groundbait mix, which explodes out of the feeder quickly when it hits bottom, help to draw the fish in.

HOW TO ENTER THE DRENNAN CUP

1 CATCH a big coarse fish by design. Take a picture (no blurred or altered backgrounds please), and forward it to freddie.sandford@bauermedia.co.uk

3 AT the end of the season, readers pick their favourite catches, and the winning angler scoops a cool £2,000!

2 DRENNAN picks its favourites. For your first award you win £80, plus a Drennan Weekly Winner's cap and badge.

Running since 1985, the Drennan Cup is Britain's No1 weekly catch competition which rewards anglers who target big coarse fish by design.

LAST-GASP FISH LANDS HOWARTH NARROW VICTORY



Guru-backed star edges a nail-biter to scoop £45,000 top prize

MAVER MATCH THIS FINAL (SATURDAY)

Hayfield Lakes (25 pegs)

THIS year's Maver Match This final went right down to the wire, and it was James Howarth who edged over the line right at the death to lift the prestigious title.

A close encounter was expected with such an elite standard of competitor, but nobody envisaged just how tight it would be as the Guru-backed angler banked a last-gasp carp to pip commercial match fishing icon Jamie Hughes.

That fish helped the eventual champion to a

187lb 12oz total, which was just enough to stop Jamie's 184lb 1oz netful from claiming back-to-back titles.

Tom Edwards finished third on 173lb 13oz, and over half of the 25-man field caught over 100lb at a bang in-form Hayfield Lakes.

Angling Times caught up with James to get an insight into his winning tactics...

FANCIED HOTSPOT

"Match peg 11 on Big Adams (permanent peg 35) had been in great form in the lead up to the event, and I felt I had a chance of competing when I drew it," said James.

"The plan was to start on hard pellets on the short pole,



Feeding casters over the long pole line proved a key turning point for the winner.

but when that didn't produce a single bite in the first 15 minutes, it was time to go on to the long pole line.

"I'd been feeding 6mm hard pellets over it, and my 8mm hookbait presented over the

top produced two carp – but it just didn't feel as if there were that many big fish on the deck.

"Andy Bennett was my bank runner, and we decided to start blasting in casters on the



Hayfield Lakes hosted yet another thrilling final.

long pole to try and get the fish competing shallow.

"This was something that I'd never considered at Hayfield until Andy gave it a go while struggling a few weeks ago at the venue and caught well.

"I started loosefeeding the area to draw the fish in and, as I primed it, I used a mugging rig to try to pick off the odd cruising carp. That got me another two fish before I felt it was time to drop shallow.

"With over an hour gone, and a few people getting into a rhythm, it really needed to work to make sure I didn't fall too far behind and drop out of the race."

SHALLOW SUCCESS

"The long pole line was well over 10ft deep, and I set my rig to 2ft 6ins. Hayfield is also home to a lot of skimmers, and I had a feeling they'd play a big part on the shallow line if it worked.

"That is exactly how it panned out, and by making slight depth adjustments the float kept going under.

"In the next three hours I caught plenty of carp, with around 45lb of skimmers going into the net too.



James (right) celebrates with his bank runner, Andy Bennett.

"I wasn't alone in catching well, though, and I felt that my margins would need to come good if I were to remain in contention."

MARGIN FRUSTRATION

"The margins felt a little too deep, and I potted some dead maggots in and let them settle for a while," James continued.

"When I dropped on top I caught one, and lost four other fish that were almost

certainly foul hooked. More bait was added to try and get them settled better on the deck and, while I rested that spot, I went shallow and caught another two carp and a couple of big skimmers.

"My next visit down the edge was a different story, and I caught three in as many chucks, before it went manic in the final 20 minutes.

"Another five went into my nets in that time, with one just before the whistle went.

"Andy had been keeping a tally of what I'd caught, and he'd estimated I was on 166lb, which was going to be shy of what I reckoned was needed.

"But I've been slightly short on estimating big carp weights in the past, and I just hoped that I was off the mark again this time!

"Thankfully, I was, and my 187lb 12oz was just over 3lb more than what Jamie had in his nets. His last-gasp fish was a skimmer and mine was a 9lb carp, and that's what made the difference.

"It's a struggle to explain what this means to me, as I've worked so hard to land one of the big titles.

"My better half and I are expecting our second child soon, and the winnings will come in very handy for that, but I think a celebratory holiday has to be on the agenda too!"

RESULT: 1 J Howarth, Guru/Mainline Match, 187-12-0; 2 J Hughes, Matrix/SonuBaits, 184-1-0; 3 T Edwards, Daiwa, 173-13-0; 4 R Swan, Guru/Mainline Match, 173-6-0; 5 J Brooks, Drennan/Blake's Baits, 161-12-0; 6 R Lidgard, 155-5-0.

IN BRIEF

FISH SOUTH FINAL

THE Maver Match This showdown wasn't the only big event being staged over the weekend, as the Fish South final took place at Essex's Puddledock Fishery.

A total of 40 anglers had qualified for the big two-day event, and a massive £10,000 went to the eventual champion.

Cumulative weight would be the deciding factor, and at the end of the weekend it was Alex Clements who took the title.

The MAP-backed star showed he had got the venue well and truly sussed out, winning the match on both days to put a combined total of 460lb 12oz on the scales.

That left him well clear of second-placed Ben Townsend, who amassed 336lb 12oz, while Jay Martin took the final podium place with 322lb 2oz.

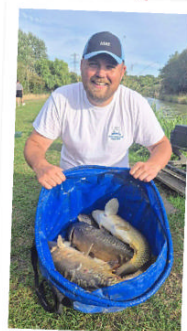
Alex kicked off his campaign with a masterclass display from match peg 1 on the Snake Lake, rotating hard pellets on the short pole and on the far bank before bagging up in style down the margins in the latter stages for 234lb 4oz.

He showed no mercy to his rivals on day two, using similar tactics from fancied match peg 26 to top the pile once again with 226lb 8oz.

Speaking after the event, Alex said: "I'm absolutely ecstatic, and I don't think it has sunk in yet.

"I had the wind coming in towards me on day two, and it plumbed up perfectly. As soon as I put the plummet on, I knew I had half a chance with the depths that I had in front of me and down the margins."

RESULT: 1 A Clements, MAP, 460-12-0; 2 B Townsend, Matrix, 336-12-0; 3 J Martin, 322-2-0; 4 D Lock, 309-0-0; 5 B Gibbons, Drennan, 306-8-0; 6 C Dicks, Matrix, 298-12-0.



GET READY WITH

ROB PERKINS

PUT MORE RIVER PERCH IN YOUR NET!

TEMPERATURES will continue to ebb away in the coming weeks and, while some aspects of fishing will become slightly trickier, others will become more productive.

Those who have been waiting patiently for conditions to come good for big river perch are in for a treat, as the appetite and willingness to feed of these predators grows apace as autumn progresses.

Almost every river now has a healthy head of these spirited fish, and the approach needed to catch them is far from complicated.

Pole fishing works a treat, for a variety of reasons, and if you set up appropriately and follow a few basic rules, it'll outscore most other tactics.



GIVE IT A GO



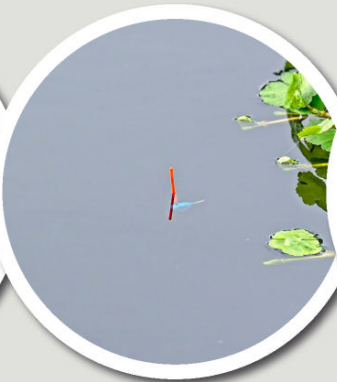
TARGET MULTIPLE LINES

Analyse your swim, and identify the areas you think could have big-perch potential. Features such as moored boats, weedbeds and marginal spots along the edge of slacks can all be productive. Each spot is often home to just a couple of big fish at a time, and moving between lines gives you the best chance of keeping the bites coming.



HAVE BAIT OPTIONS READY

Worms should play a big part in your perch fishing campaign. Lobworms are the ideal stand-out hookbait, while chopped dendrobaenas introduced through a bait dropper are better for loosefeeding. Worms can make effective 'cocktails', and combining a small piece with either a single maggot or a caster can rejuvenate a flagging swim.



ROTATE TWO SET-UPS

The pace of the flow should dictate which type of set-up to use. A float such as a 2g Cralusso Bubble is ideal for holding still in pacier spots, shotted with a tapered string of No8s. My second pole rig is for slower areas, and incorporates a 0.5g round-bodied float with strung-out shotted. Both have a 0.14mm hooklength and a size 14 hook.

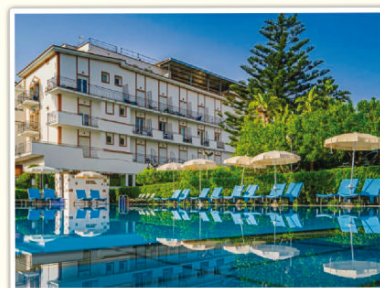


CONNECT WITH EVERY BITE!

Perch have surprisingly bony mouths that can be quite hard to penetrate with a hookpoint at times. Striking firmly is important, and an elastic with a bit of grunt will serve you in that respect. A grade 8-10 will suffice in open water, but step that up to a 10-12 if there is a danger of any hooked fish trying to get into weedbeds or other snags.

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4 Star Hotel Aequa, Vico Equense

The 4 star Hotel Aequa is located in the charming cliff-top town of Vico Equense, just a short walk from inviting pavement cafes, restaurants, and local shops. Nestled within its own tranquil gardens, the hotel boasts spectacular views over the Bay of Naples. Guests can enjoy a seasonal outdoor swimming pool, a welcoming bar, and an on-site restaurant serving regional cuisine. The comfortable en-suite rooms feature modern amenities including a flat-screen TV. Conveniently positioned just minutes from the Circumvesuviana train station, the hotel provides easy access to nearby Sorrento.

To book or for more information visit... **www.mistralholidays.co.uk**

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THE BEST MATCH & COARSE LUGGAGE SETS

Want to look the ultimate professional, or just carry your kit as cheaply as possible? Whatever your needs, here are eight of the best tackle and bait storage solution sets...



PRESTON INNOVATIONS COMPETITION

A company with a monumental luggage collection – if Preston doesn't make it, it probably doesn't exist! A step down from the top-end Supera X and Hardcase ranges, the modestly-priced Competition set comprises a bait bowl, a padded reel case that also holds two spare spools, plus six- and eight-tube holdalls, each with an external brolly/net handle pocket.

There is also an insulated bait bag with hard moulded EVA base and front pocket, or a large version with an extra side pocket, a choice of EVA or waterproof double net/tray bags and two- or four-rod ready bags made from the firm's hardcase material. The latter have internal straps and pouches to hold and stagger the rods in place.

For larger items, there is a three-pocket traditional-style carryall and a 90cm long roller and roost bag capable of holding two XL rollers.

OUR VERDICT: The range might be classed as being on the budget side, but the innovative designs, sensible proportions and sheer volume of choice make this simple and honest luggage collection a rival to many premium versions.

Price: Reel Case £15.99, Bait Bowl £16.99, Holdalls £59.99 - £64.99, Rod Holdalls £64.99 - £89.99, Roller and Roost Bag £54.99, Carryall £54.99, Bait Bags £44.99 - £49.99, EVA Net Bag £49.99, Double Net Bag £49.99, www.prestoninnovations.com

NUFISH AQUALOCK LUGGAGE

A smart and robust set of luggage in a wipe-clean material with logo-embossed webbing reinforcements and padded straps, plus oversized zips with strengthened pullers.

The range includes a roller and accessory bag measuring a roomy 870mm x 250mm x 250mm and featuring a full-length zipped pocket. The 55-litre carryall has a large front pocket to take nets or an Aqualock side tray, two side pockets, a moulded hard base and a clever key and wallet zipped pouch hidden under the lid.

The insulated tackle and bait bag features a hard moulded plastic base, along with three external pockets to take all your bait and smaller items. Both four- and six-rod ready bags have double staggered butt pouches to accommodate multiple lengths of rods, spare tips and a landing net pole. A two-compartment, 10-tube pole holdall completes the set.

OUR VERDICT: A luxuriously detailed and great quality collection that wouldn't look out of place on a flight to the Maldives, let alone on a muddy riverbank! You can tell a lot of thought has gone into the design, as all the proportions fit modern match gear perfectly.

We particularly like the Tardis-like ready rod bags that swallow up multiple blanks with no cramming required.

Price: Net Bag £34.99, Roller and Accessory Bag £49.99, Carryall £64.99, Insulated Tackle and Bait Bag £64.99, Ready Rod Bags £119.99 - £139.99, Pole Holdall £84.99, www.nufish.co.uk





Best
priced

DAIWA MATCHMAN

Rugged and durable luggage at a great price. Coloured black with discreet branding, the traditional-style 56cm carryall has a zipped side compartment for nets, two side pockets and a small, zipped compartment for your phone or keys. For match anglers, there's a choice of two sizes of PVC stink bag taking 3–5 nets or a three-compartment triple net bag. The insulated cool bag has internal dividers, allowing you to keep food and different baits separated, and includes a zipped pocket under the lid. The six-tube holdall has two spacious external pockets for umbrellas, bank sticks and accessories, while the two-rod holdall will take a third rod without a reel, or a landing net pole.

To top it off, there are two styles of Bitz bag, one with hard plastic internal dividers to take feeders or floats, and a second pouch-like bag in two sizes to take anything from pole pots to reels.

OUR VERDICT: A simple range made to reliable and trusted designs, ideal for the angler who just wants an effective way of transporting and storing their gear while on the bank, with minimal cost or fuss.

Price: Bitz Bags £9.99 - £17.99, Carryall £47.99, Six-tube Holdall £79.99, Two-rod Holdall £71.99, Cool Bag £41.99, PVC Net Bags £36.99 - £47.99, Triple Net Bag £41.99, www.daiwasports.com

MATRIX HORIZON X

Developed to offer high-end, no compromise luggage for match anglers, this is an all-encompassing range with some exciting features. It's constructed from durable and fully waterproof PVC-coated fabric, and finished with Neoprene handles and waterproof PU-coated zips. Clever 2-4 and 3-6 rigid rod holdalls – which top and tail your ready-made rods to save space – even have a rigid rod tip case and landing net pole sleeve built in. Alternatively, there is a two-rod sleeve available in two lengths.

The multi pole holdall has a built-in rigid top kit case that will carry up to 25 top kits without tubes. Two sizes of net bag are both fully waterproof, while the side tray bag contains a mesh for drainage. The compact carryall comes with three internal storage cases, and the cool bag has a built-in bait system.

Two sizes of storage bag are suitable for pole rollers and other larger items, both with a full-length zipped front pocket. There is even a boot bag to help to keep your car clean, finished like the rest of the set in a modest black colour with vibrant yellow detailing.

OUR VERDICT: It might be a little pricey, but this luggage is incredibly well designed and built to last. Almost every luggage-based innovation in fishing can be found in this exceptional range, that anyone would want to use!

Price: Multi-Pole Holdall £209.99, Rigid Rod Holdalls £169.99 - £190, Two-rod Sleeves £89.99 - £100, Compact Carryall £89.99, Storage Bags £79.99 - £89.99, Side Tray Storage £59.99, Bait System £79.99, Multi Net Bags £70 - £79.99, Boot Bag £34.99, www.fishmatrix.co.uk



Most
ingenious
design

DRENNAN DMS

Standing for 'Drennan Modular System', this luggage has been designed from the bait box upwards. From the various bait boxes, trays, strainers and cool blocks right through to the Visi Boxes and Carryalls, every part packs neatly together, no matter what permutations the angler wants.

Finished in waterproof and durable EVA, all the items are available separately or as part of larger sets.

Starting with the cool boxes, there is a 25-litre and a 37-litre option, each coming with the correctly-sized cool blocks to fit the base. There is also a five-piece bait set that comes with a bait tray, three-pint bait box and a pair of two-pint bait boxes, as well as a Visi Box to keep them in. The solid EVA carryalls come in 25-litre and 37-litre versions, and Visi Boxes can be bought to fit or with the carryalls as part of the five- or seven-piece set.

For those wanting a more traditional carryall, 40-litre, 65-litre and 85-litre models with side pockets are also available, with the larger two able to take keepnets as well. The Visi Boxes – the building blocks of the system – are always double the size of the previous one, meaning they will all fit together and come in 2.5-litre, 5-litre and 10-litre sizes.

For rods and poles, there are two sizes of carryall, a top kit case and tube, plus two- and four-rod hardcases.

OUR VERDICT: EVA luggage is not new, but the way this all packs together is novel – everything in the DMS range stacks, packs and fits inside each other, from the smallest bait box to the largest carryall.

When it comes to offering choice, this range is overwhelming. Whatever you want to carry, there is a style or design of bag to suit you!

Price: EVA Carryalls £34.95 - £49.95, Carryalls £59.95 - £99.95, Cool Bags £54.95 - £64.95, Five-piece Bait Set £35.95, Five- to seven-piece EVA Carryall Sets £98.95 - £149.95, Kit Bags £79.99 - £109.99, Holdalls £129.95 - £139.95, Rod Hardcases £99.95 - £129.95, Kit Case £89.95, Kit Tube £59.95, Net Bags £49.95 - £54.95, Visi Boxes £12.95 - £24.95, www.drennantackle.com



MAP SEAL SYSTEM

A thoroughly well thought-out range of EVA luggage offering a waterproof, durable, lightweight and strong storage solution.

The system starts with the accessory cases, which include the tiny C5000 for smaller items like feeders or pellet waggles, the C4000 which is double the size at 22cm x 12.5cm x 15cm, the 45cm-long C3000, and the biggest of the lot, the C2000, which they can all fit inside. The C2000 then fits the C1000 carryall, which comes with a selection of seven of the cases inside.

For larger items, there is the R1000 roller bag, which will take two dual rollers, and the XL and XXL stink bag for 4-6 nets and side trays. For bait, there is a dedicated system with five EVA tubs or a bait bag with removable top section for smaller items or for separating the contents. There is even a dedicated catapult bag and a bucket liner to keep groundbait fresh and dry, as well as three sizes of bait bowl.

OUR VERDICT: Everything from pole pots and waggles to seatbox accessories and pole rollers – this impressive range with its classy carbon-effect finish covers it all. Being tidy, organised and keeping your gear dry has never been easier.

PRICE: Accessory Cases £11.99 - £29.99, Carryall Set £174.99, Roller Bag £49.99, Bait Bag £64.99, Bait System £44.99, Bucket Liner £35, Net Bags £54.99 - £59.99, Catapult Case £14.99

MAVER MV-R

Devised by Maver's team of consultants, the modest branding of this range lets the designs do the talking. There are two choices of carryall – the jumbo with a reinforced base with mudfeet, two zipped end pockets and a keepnet pocket, or our favourite, the tackle and bait carryall, with a rigid storage base with adjustable divider, a large zipped pocket across the top, large front zipped pocket, two zipped end pockets and a mobile phone pocket.

The modestly priced and sized 57cm x 20cm x 23cm tackle/ accessory bag features a detachable internal divider, while the identical-sized bait bag will take half-a-dozen three-pint bait tubs. The similarly proportioned but longer 80cm roller and roost bag has a fixed divider and will take two Maver rollers and all your roosts. Both the six- and eight-tube holdall feature two internal pockets, and an enveloped zip opening for easy access. The triple rod holdall features a central zip and three padded compartments to hold your ready-made rods.

OUR VERDICT: Compact shaped bags with plenty of storage, ideal for the angler that doesn't want to lug around huge bags.

With its multiple sized and shaped pockets to hold plenty of smaller items, the tackle and bait bag is the star of the show, and arguably the best bag of its type on the market.

Price: Jumbo Carryall £69.99, Tackle and Bait Carryall £84.99, Bait Bag £41.99, Tackle/Accessory Bag £39.99, Holdalls £72.99 - £88.99, Triple Rod Holdall £93.99, www.mavermatch.co.uk

Most
compact



Best
value



GURU TEAM LUGGAGE

Guru's Fusion range has long been considered one of the toughest, best designed and most desirable luggage sets on the market, with just one setback – the cost! To allow more anglers access to some of the company's great features and designs, Guru has worked hard to develop its new Team Luggage. Water-resistant, wipe-clean and designed to fit existing Fusion cases and other Guru products, we are stunned at how well they have fulfilled their objective!

The carryall is of a traditional design with a front pocket, two side pockets and a reinforced base. The XL carryall, however, is of a completely different design, rectangular in shape to take pole rollers and feeder arms, as well as smaller items in one of its six additional side, top, front and internal pockets.

The cool bag is sized to take Bait-Pro and Fusion cases, as well as bait boxes in both the main space and the front pocket.

The pole holdall will take up to six tubes or two X-Cases and is very similar in design to the top-end Fusion bag with its internal zipped dolly butt compartment. For rods there is a two-rod holdall with internal pockets for items like landing net poles. The net bag will take three keepnets, and also has a modular front pocket.

OUR VERDICT: The quality of the material Guru has used has to be seen to be believed – we have not seen anything like it in a luggage range this inexpensive before!

Although the all the items are great, it's the XL carryall we have fallen in love with, as it's ideally sized to take most anglers' kit and has loads of pockets of varying sizes to tuck away all those vita bits and pieces.

Price: Cool Bag £44.99, Net Bag £44.99, Carryall £69.99, XL Carryall £79.99, Two-rod Holdall £69.99, Pole Holdall £69.99, www.tackleguru.co.uk

TACKLE GUIDE

ADDITIVES TO GIVE YOU AN EDGE

Quick-and-easy liquid products that'll boost your hookbaits and freebies!

CC MOORE FEEDSTIM XP

This phenomenal liquid has been making waves on the angling scene ever since its release. Suitable for use on all bait items, it has proved to be widely effective for both

carp and match anglers. It creates a prolonged boost of attraction when used with boilies, particles and pellets, as well as stick, spod, Method and groundbait mixes.

In fact, it is so attractive that it has been known to draw fish to hookbaits that have been submerged in the water for only a few minutes!

WHY WE LIKE IT: CC Moore makes some impressive claims with regard to this versatile additive. Our advice is that if you're into fishing with pellets and mesh bags you should definitely give it a go.

Price: £11.99,

www.ccmoore.com

● For more information on this impressive CC Moore liquid additive, check out the latest *Tackle Talk* video on the *Angling Times* YouTube channel.

DYNAMITE BAITS XL LIQUIDS

Dynamite's popular XL liquid flavours cover the needs of all types of angler. Perfect for adding to groundbait mixes, pellets, meat, corn and hookbaits, they are all also PVA-friendly and, as a pre-mixed flavouring, you can use as little or as much as you want.

WHY WE LIKE THEM: We particularly like the Liquid Brasmie added to water when mixing groundbait for bream, skimmers and F1s because it has a lovely, richly sweet aroma. And if you're planning on doing any perch fishing this autumn then you won't want to be without a bottle or two of the Liquid Worm.

Price: £4.99, www.dynamitebaits.com





SONUBAITS HAZE LIQUIDS

Made to enhance, colour and flavour hookbaits, pellets or groundbait prior to use, Haze is user-friendly and works year-round. Although it's quite thin, it's denser than water, ensuring it clings to and remains around your bait while leaking an attractive cloud of colour and scent into the immediate surroundings.

WHY WE LIKE THEM: A great product for coloured water, as it spreads out from your bait or feed, attracting fish to it. It also comes in eight flavours and colours.

Price: £5.19, www.sonubaits.com



BAIT-TECH SPECIAL 'G' LIQUIDS

Leaching out a strong flavour trail into the water, Special 'G' liquids have a thick consistency, so they'll adhere well to your hookbaits and feed items. In four variations, they can be used for all fish species. For the best results, drizzle them directly on to your feeder, pellets, groundbait or PVA mesh bags.

WHY WE LIKE THEM: There are plenty of tactical uses for these richly-flavoured liquids – everything from soaking PVA bags to coating single hookbaits.

Price: £7.99, www.bait-tech.com



MAINLINE MATCH STICKY SYRUPS

Unleash the full potential of your bait and feeds with Mainline Match Sticky Syrups. All six distinctive flavours have been formulated to trigger fish feeding responses.

PVA-compatible, they can be used with 'tea bag' tactics, while their viscosity also makes them ideal for glugging loaded Method or Hybrid feeders, or any type of hookbait.

WHY WE LIKE THEM: Not only do these Mainline Syrups spread out attractively on the lakebed, surrounding your hookbait, feeder or mesh bags, but they also send an attractive cloud to the surface, which makes them deadly for use in shallow water.

Price: £4.99, www.mainline-baits.com



FJUKA SENSATE BAIT DYES

You can change your bait or feed's colour in seconds using Sensate Bait Dye. The flavouring accelerant also gets fish feeding quickly, and can be used to give fishery pellets an extra edge. Water-soluble and fish-friendly, simply add a couple of drops directly on to your hookbait or add it to water when soaking pellets or mixing groundbaits.

WHY WE LIKE THEM: Vivid colours are strong enough to dye most types of baits when directly applied. Take note, however, that you need to shake the bottle vigorously to activate it before use.

Price: £14.99, www.fjuka.shop



PEG NO1 TRANSFORMA LIQUIDS

Ideal for use with pellets, Transforma liquids come in four flavours and colours, all with strong aromas.

For the best results, mix a small amount of the liquid with water before soaking your pellets.

WHY WE LIKE THEM: Quick and easy to use, Peg No1 Transforma liquids are among the strongest in terms of both colour and scent out of all the liquid additives that we've seen and tested.

Price: £3.99, www.copdockmill.co.uk



RINGERS GLAZE LIQUIDS

If you're looking for that extra edge, check out Ringers Glaze Liquids. These innovative flavours and colours are perfect for improving the attraction of any bait. They are also ideal for Method or Hybrid feeders, PVA mesh bags, or single baits, where the viscous Glazes stick like the proverbial to a blanket!

WHY WE LIKE THEM: Walk round any carp and feeder-dominated venue and you will see more Ringers Glazes than any other flavourings... enough said!

Price: £10.09



FISHKEEPING GOES HIGH-TECH WITH NEW 'eDNA' TESTING

Science is now making identifying parasites and non-native species easier than ever

THE technology associated with environmental DNA detection is developing rapidly, and is becoming increasingly available in a wide variety of applications.

When any living organism, whether it be a fish or a parasite, moves through its environment, it sheds its own DNA which can remain in the water for two weeks or more.

We all have DNA, and it's something with a pattern that's unique to each individual, including a parasite or bacterium which potentially can cause disease. The challenge, however, lies in isolating and identifying DNA from an organism of interest,



Argulus is a common parasite found on freshwater fish.

whether it is from a non-native species now residing in a water body, or a rare protected animal. The science behind environmental DNA (known as eDNA) detection is progressing rapidly, since the positive identification of particular DNA is a positive confirmation of the presence of the target species in the particular water body being sampled. Conversely, the inability to detect the specific eDNA in a water sample does not definitely indicate the absence of the organism, but simply the fact that it wasn't found in that water sample.

Mainstream Fisheries Ltd, in collaboration with **Fish Treatment Ltd**, have been involved in the development of unique eDNA testing both



eDNA can detect the presence of protected species like water voles.



A state-of-the-art lab is used.

in the coarse fish industry and in ornamental fish, and have acquired unique access to a state-of-the-art specialist laboratory with ISO 9001:2015 accreditation, which has designed sophisticated analytical methods to extract and amplify the DNA of target organisms.

When a sample of the water is collected from a water body for analysis it is put through a special filter and is then sent to the state-of-the-art specialist laboratory.

There the scientists can determine the order of the sub-structures of the DNA, and the patterns of these, which are unique to every living organism. This is the key to confirming which specific parasite or disease-causing agent or any other target species is present.

As far as fish diseases are concerned, it is clear that taking water samples is a much easier process than examining individual fish for the presence of specific

parasites or other infectious disease agents, especially if large numbers of fish may be involved, or if the species of fish are such that skin scrapes are not feasible.

Practically, it will take a few days for the laboratory to carry out the procedure, but the confidence level in the accuracy of the procedure is at least as good as that of human operators examining the fish, and in some cases may even be more accurate.

However, as with any new technique, it is sensible to use the results as a likely indication of the presence of the target parasite or infectious organism. No technique is 100% infallible.

In the case of non-native or protected species, again the simplicity of taking a water sample makes finding them easier – a positive result from the laboratory will 100% confirm the presence of that species in the water body. A negative result, on the other hand, simply demonstrates that we were not able to find the DNA in question in the sample – it does not imply the absence of that creature, but simply that more water sample tests are required.

The ease of now looking for non-native species such as catfish, sturgeon, American signal crayfish or mitten crabs, as well as protected animals such as water voles, is likely to improve detection rates and consequent water body management.



eDNA Mainstream/ Fish Treatment Limited

Mainstream Fisheries Ltd in collaboration with Fish Treatment Ltd have been involved in the development of unique eDNA testing both in the Coarse Fish Industry and in Ornamental fish, and have acquired unique access to a state of the art specialist laboratory with ISO 9001:2015 accreditation, which has designed sophisticated analytical methods to extract and amplify the DNA of target organisms. This means it can find minute traces of these organisms with a high degree of accuracy, and potentially has a wide range of applications.

eDNA Mainstream is offering specialised test kits to take water samples from the sites where the target fish are living, and all that needs to be done is to follow the clear straightforward instructions (which includes filtering the water as part of the sampling kit) and send the filter directly to eDNA Mainstream in the post-paid packaging supplied with the kit.

These test kits can be used to look for the presence of a wide variety of species including all the Section 30 parasites, diseases such as Koi Herpesvirus (KHV), and the indication of non-natives such as Catfish, Sturgeon, Signal Crayfish, Mitten Crab as well as Zebra and Quagga mussels. Our latest venture is developing a test for Water Voles.

All of this technology is being offered at a competitive price with rapid results within a few working days.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT
info@mainstreamfisheries.co.uk or 01790 753324





FIVE SPECIES TO PEN INTO AUTUMN PLANS

The leaves may be starting to fall soon, but sport's on the up-and-up as temperatures drop – so make the most of it before winter sets in

METEOROLOGICAL autumn began on September 1, and astronomical will follow three weeks later. So it's time to start planning for this wonderful season.

The trees are clad in shades of gold and bronze, while the air is fresh, with a slightly earthy scent to it.

The tide is turning between night and day, and soon feast



will turn to famine. But for now there's plenty of bounty to enjoy, so if your tackle has been relegated to the garage over the sunny summer holidays, now's the time to dig it out again.

There are so many adventures to enjoy, and here are just a few suggestions you might care to try.

Perch aren't on my summer radar, but as soon as the

leaves start to fall, my thoughts turn to these striped brigands. If I were to target them in the heat I'd choose daybreak, when the water is at its coolest, but now, as temperatures drop, I reverse this logic and prefer dusk, when it's at its warmest.

This is only a generalisation. There are other factors to

Continued over the page

Perch are always high on the agenda in autumn.





Floatfishing for chub makes for some fantastic sport.

consider. If the water is coloured, that could mean the perch will come on the feed much earlier in the afternoon. You need to time your fishing with an eye on the water temperature and clarity, and prevailing light levels.

There are number of ways

you can target perch, but my favourite is with small livebaits. I am unapologetic about mentioning this, since I have no interest in turning angling woke.

The sight of a chubber float bobbing rhythmically and then darting around

erratically as a big perch draws near is so exciting. A single sharp stab, then the float sails away.

Just thinking about it makes me want to grab my tackle and go now! This is a wonderfully traditional autumnal angling pursuit.

Last week I mentioned chub on the float, so I won't dwell on this tactic for too long. But, as the river's pace picks up and the weed clears, this really is a wonderful time to go floatfishing.

You need to control the river, not the other way round, and the way to do this is to ensure the trot down the flow is smooth and natural.

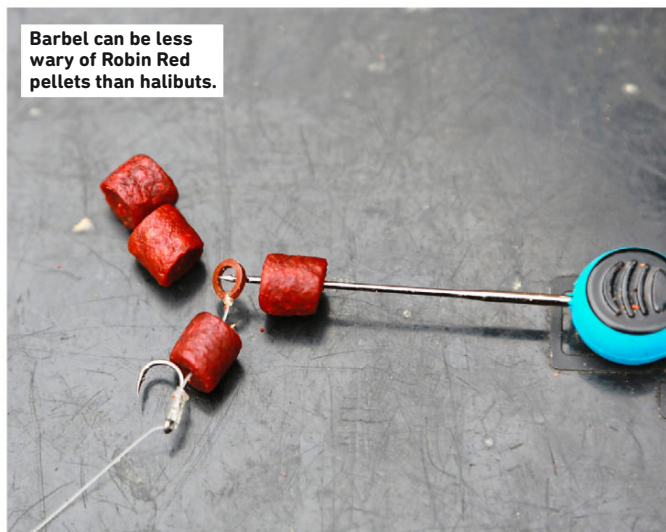
A generous shooting capacity helps with this, and floats capable of taking such heavy loadings will support bigger baits, notably bread.

I appreciate that not everyone can afford a gallon of maggots, but most can buy a couple of white loaves – one for liquidising or mashing, the other for flake. That's the beauty of our sport. It doesn't have to be expensive.

Barbel love pellets, of that there is no doubt, but they're not stupid. Once they've been caught a few times they're bound to get suspicious.

In recent years I've discovered that, as the season draws on, the less favoured

Barbel can be less wary of Robin Red pellets than halibuts.



"I've discovered that, as the season draws on, the less favoured Robin Red carp-style pellets will result in more fish"



There are few finer sights than a big river roach in your net.

than with the 'cod fishing' gear that seems to be the current fashion.

I start with a snap link bead to connect the lead. Tungsten stops pushed up against a twisted boom section in the mainline are far more subtle than plastic booms and, because I'm after big fish, I'll substitute the mainline loop with a swivel to which I'll attach a long, soft 12lb hooklength carrying a size 12 hook.

A good tip is to attach a pellet band to the hair formed after tying a knotless knot. This isn't to use in the normal way, but to pull through the hole in your drilled pellet.

As the pellet re-expands, it fills the hole, and that way it won't break down so quickly. Give this a go, because autumn is the time to catch lots of barbel.

A river roach is a special fish,

Robin Red carp-style pellets will result in more fish than the regulation garlic/fishmeal variety. I don't believe these pellets are more attractive, they just don't give off the same danger signals.

Small pellets undoubtedly result in more fish, and they present far better with a balanced/lighter approach



Blitzed-up boilies can be fed through a feeder.

no matter what its size, and now is probably the best time to catch a specimen than at any other in the last 20 years.

I really don't know why, but I'm very happy that this is the case. One factor might be the bait barbel anglers like using. While there still is a place for offerings such as corn and hemp, you'd be foolish to ignore the bait I've already mentioned – pellets!

Boilies are attractive to roach, too, and to make them even more palatable, try turning them into flake and powder which can be fed via a feeder. Alternatively, add a stick mix like Scopex Squid to your groundbait.

I honestly don't believe you need to use fine tackle for roach, as some claim. They're no cleverer than any other species – it's the environment that they're often found in which makes them tricky.

Finally, and it's only because I'm running out of space, I'm going to mention just one more fish to consider – and that's the zander.

I really enjoy targeting this striking species, and I've learnt they're closer in behaviour to perch than pike.

I would never dream of using big floats or drop arm indicators, preferring 5oz carbon quivertips if fishing the river, or rollover indicators on stillwaters.

I like simple running rigs with a soft wire biting trace armed with two small trebles. My favourite baits are bleak, which are snapped up with relish. If you've never caught a zander before, why not make this your target over the next few months?

Autumn really is a blessed time to be an angler, and I can't wait to get out there and get fishing!



Zander are closer in behaviour to perch than pike.

TARGET AREA

- A single pole line 6m-9m out

BAIT NEEDED

- Two tins of hemp
- A small bag of prepared tares
- Half-a-pint of maggots

VENUE FISHED

- Moat Lake, Wold Farm Fishery, Northants



THE MASTERPLAN

RELY ON HEMP AND TARES FOR BIG COMMERCIAL ROACH

Tony Curd shows why you can't afford to ignore this old-school combination of offerings throughout the autumn months

BACK when rivers, canals and natural lakes dominated the angling scene, certain bait combinations tended to work better than anything else.

Worms, casters and maggots over groundbait would often

be enough to unlock a swim, and these traditional 'live' baits have now obviously fully transitioned on to the commercial fishery scene.

However, other offerings in the bait armoury of yesteryear fell right out of favour, for no

apparent good reason, and the deadly pairing of hemp and tares was one of these.

Superb for targeting roach, in particular, these baits hardly ever get a look-in now, but Tony Curd believes that's a serious oversight on the part

of modern day commercial fishery regulars.

As carp and FIs become increasingly sluggish over the coming weeks and months, quality roach will remain more than willing to feed, and the MAP-backed star believes



hemp and tares can outscore anything else when you're looking to put together a net of autumn redfins.

"In commercials nowadays there are so many roach that have grown big because of the pellets that they Hoover up in summer," said Tony, "but once autumn comes, you need a more refined approach to catch them.

"I was guilty of overlooking hemp and tares, but when I finally experimented with them, I couldn't believe just how effective they were.

"The stamp of fish that I was catching shot up, and I was kept busy all day – the bites never seemed to dry up!"



STAGE 1 CATCH AT CLOSE QUARTERS

"When fishing with hemp and tares you need to remain active, as the trickle of loosefeed falling through the water proves a major stimulant to the fish. The seeds make a distinctive noise when breaking the surface, helping to draw fish in from outside your immediate swim.

"With all this in mind, you need to fish in an area that can be loosefed with ease, regardless of whether it is flat calm or breezy.

"Plumb up and find the base of the marginal shelf and then go just beyond it so that you are slightly away from the natural patrol route of species like carp.

"Today, that is 6m out, but at some venues it could be 5m, and up to 8m at others.

"I can regularly flick bait over this spot by hand, and if the wind picks up, I can use the catapult to maintain the necessary accuracy."

STAGE 2 SEARCH THE LAYERS

"Roach rarely stay at one depth all day, and you can quickly go from catching a fish every drop-in to struggling for an indication of any sort.

"I always set up a few different rigs. One covers fishing on the deck, and the other two are for catching shallow.

"It's wise to kick off on the deck with a 0.2g float that's shotted with No10 shot spread 3ins apart. My 'traditional' shallow rig incorporates a 4x10 dibber. This is inline, and this style of float offers a more direct connection on the strike, as hitting roach bites can be difficult at times. This is fished anything from 1ft-3ft deep.

"My other shallow rig is a Jigga float. It's been used a lot by F1 anglers over the years but when the roach are spread throughout the water column and not concentrated at one depth, it's unbeatable.

"It's set up on a 2ft 6ins length of 0.13mm line, with a bulk of No8s just above the hooklength."

A Jigga (top) and a more traditional 4x10 dibber float.



STAGE 3 LAND EVERYTHING YOU HOOK

"My elastics for fishing on the deck and shallow reflect what I'm trying to achieve. While the focus is on roach, I'm likely to catch other species too, so my rig for the bottom includes a grade 6-8 MAP TKS Solid Core Hybrid elastic.

"This is nice and soft for smaller fish, but with a puller kit

I'm able to land bonus fish such as barbel and carp without too many problems.

"Elastic for the shallow rigs is more important – particularly the Jigga, which is a self-hooking presentation, so a soft elastic is vital. If the elastic is too strong, you'll feel little 'dunks' on the tip as fish spit out the hookbait. I find that a grade 4-6 is perfect."

With a puller kit you can land almost anything.



STAGE 4 FEEL YOUR WAY IN

"This isn't a style of fishing where you must put down a big bed of bait at the start.

"The most successful anglers will gradually build a swim as the day progresses.

"Around 20-30 grains every couple of minutes is a good starting point, and it's then a matter of gauging the response.

"More often than not it is a case of increasing the quantity with each feed. Make this move if the stamp of fish is smaller than expected, or if you feel there are a lot in front of you, and you need to give them a reason to compete and stay in the swim.

"It's a pretty cheap day's fishing too. All I take are two tins of Dynamite Baits Frenzied Hempseed and a bag of prepared tares from the local tackle shop."



This is a cheap way to fish!



STAGE 5

SWITCH BETWEEN HOOKBAITS

"Tares are the obvious choice of hookbait, simply because they are slightly bigger than hemp and will stand out as they fall through the water amid the loosefeed.

"But while I will start on tares, I'll almost always have a spell when I switch to hemp on the hook.

"If the fish start to wise up and recognise the trap, this is the move to make, as they find it impossible to spot which is the hookbait.

"Take a little time to pick out a handful

of bigger grains that have a clear split and, when you come to use one, clamp the bend of the hook in between the two shells and leave the point on show."



Keep them guessing and you'll get more bites.



Hemp and tares have the knack of sorting out the better roach!

Join top match anglers **Lee Kerry** and **Rob Woolton** each week as they unveil the tactics and techniques that really make a difference



Bosnia's Lake Modrac played host to this year's World Float Championships.



"WE WERE WITHIN A WHISKER OF LANDING A MEDAL"

THIS WEEK: Lee discusses England's campaign at this year's World Float Championships

FISHING for the England Feeder team and competing in the World Club Champs has taken up a lot of my time this year, and that rules me out of even being in the frame for selection for the nation's floatfishing team.

I wouldn't have the time to commit in terms of preparation to do the job justice, but I did think I could play a supporting role.

So when manager Mark Downes asked me to travel to Bosnia with the team I was delighted, and I couldn't wait

to help them hopefully land a gold medal.

PLAN OF ATTACK

I was one of several backstage staff in the party whose role in practice was to help the team work out the best attack for the match days. We'd keep

an eye on our opponents, constantly trying to work out what baits and tactics were working best.

We'd also offer advice to our guys, feeding back on anything we'd learned to help them perfect their approach on the huge, and stunningly

KEY LESSONS

- Whether it be a club match or a World Championship, timing is everything. Take plenty of time to work out patterns on a venue so that you can make educated switches between tactics and baits, as opposed to doing it randomly.

- Don't be afraid of asking others for advice. One huge strength of all England's coarse fishing teams is the support system, with open conversations between anglers and backroom staff about tactics often the key to working out the best possible approach.

- Don't be too hard on yourself when a peg with very little potential fails to deliver. You can only catch what is in front of you, and damage limitation in the form of going for a section win as opposed to outright glory is sometimes the better option.

beautiful, Lake Modrac.

Depths varied dramatically from 5ft down to 14ft throughout the match length, and it was alive with fish. Huge shoals of bleak were present, and bonus skimmers and carassio up to 1kg were the other side of the equation.

We worked out that timings would be key. Starting with the bleak, it would then be down to us runners to help the team make decisions.

If they were ahead in the bleak race and no big fish were being caught nearby, then they'd stay on it.

On the other hand, if they were struggling and we'd seen big fish being caught, we'd give them the heads-up to think about changing.

ALMOST PERFECT

We took the plan into day one of the tournament and we had some fantastic results. We'd read most of the areas well as a team, but unfortunately Matt Godfrey was on a very sticky peg. A brief look for bigger fish on the long pole didn't produce much, and that spell without anything going into the net set him back in his section.

It goes without saying that Matt is one of the best anglers in the world, and if the fish had been there in the

numbers required, he'd have caught them. We finished the day in fourth on 24 points, still in contention for a medal.

GUNNING FOR GLORY

Croatia, France and Italy made up the top three teams on day one and, since they had a decent cushion over us, we had to take a few gambles on day two.

Top two in the section was the aim for everyone, and I was behind Cameron Hughes for the match. He caught bleak on a short whip for two hours, and I estimated he was probably fourth in section at that point.

We'd have settled for that on day one, but we needed more this time, and he was soon on the long pole, targeting bigger fish. It was a 'boom or bust' moment and, thankfully for Cameron, it paid off as he put in a fantastic display to take second in his zone.

News filtered through that several of the other lads had worked wonders, but sadly Steve Hemingray was down a little in his section.

Once again, I don't need to tell anyone how good he is, and the truth of the matter is that his peg just didn't have the potential to produce what we needed.



Helping the team to manage and prepare bait was part of my role.

We ended fifth overall and, gutted though we were, I was immensely proud of the lads. They are an elite team that put so much time and effort into this event. They are up

there with the very best in the world, and in Bosnia it all boiled down to the fine margins to decide who bagged medals and who walked away empty-handed.

We fell the wrong side of the verdict this time, but I can almost guarantee that it won't be long before our lads get the rub of the green.



In the end, bleak proved pivotal in the overall result.

JOIN THE EDGE!

The Edge is an online channel created by Lee and Rob to help them share their winning tactics with viewers. They've filmed hundreds of hours of informative high-quality content, covering a wide range of tactics and styles of venue.

Scan the QR code to head over to their website to find out more and subscribe!

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ASK THE EXPERTS

THE ADVICE YOU NEED TO GET THE BEST FROM YOUR FISHING



STEVE RINGER

World Feeder champ and a constantly successful matchman



ROB WOOTTON

Top matchman and former Maver Match This winner

BREAD FEEDER RIG

What baits should I use to feeder fish for roach at dusk, or in coloured water?

Vic Irvine, email

A You can't go too far wrong with bread which, believe it or not, has quite a strong aroma, especially if you use a fresh loaf.

Use a cage feeder, set up either helicopter-style or as a running rig, and cram it with liquidised bread, with flake on the hook.

I also like to add a few small pellets and a bit of crushed hemp to the feeder contents. Roach adore both of these, and adding them will draw in any bigger fish in the vicinity.

If you're being plagued by small fish, try banding a small pellet to the back of the hook instead of using breadflake.

Recast every 15-20 minutes, and don't loosefeed too much – just rely on the feeder to keep the swim primed. Good luck!

Paul Garner

1 MAINLINE

4lb monofilament, or very light braid

2 FEEDER

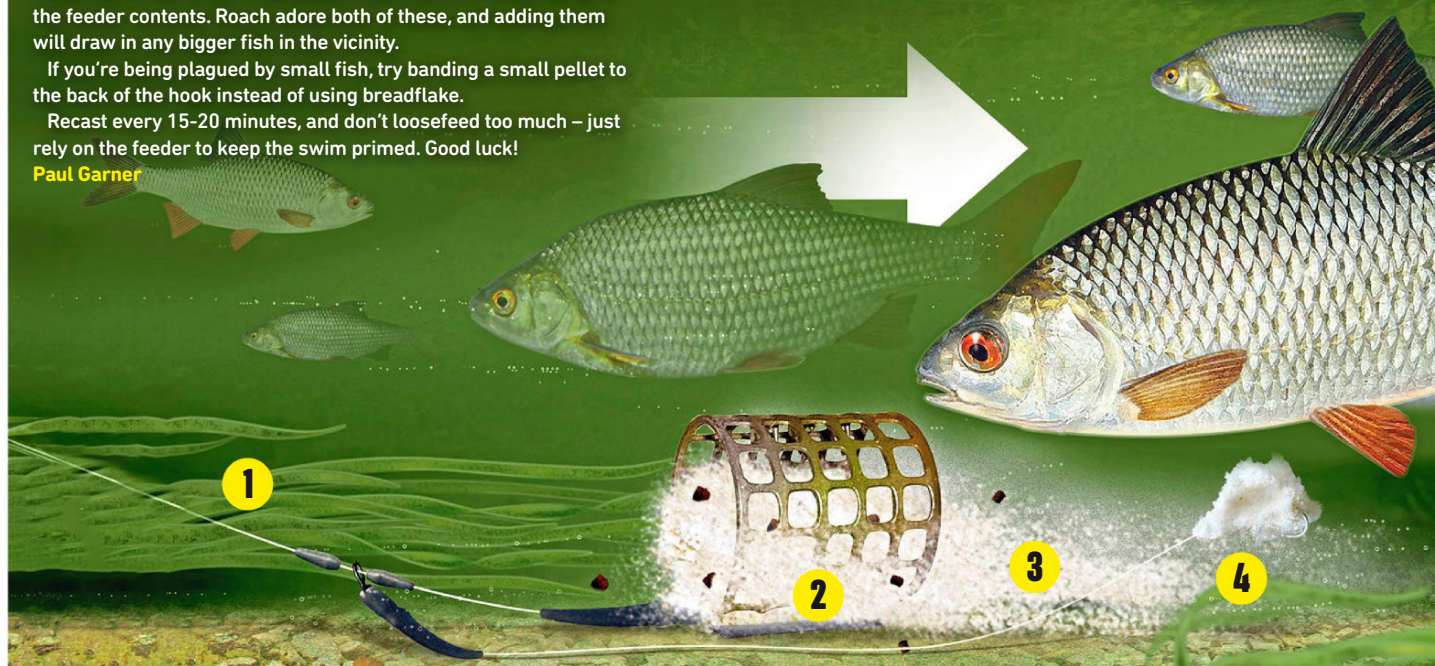
20g/30g Drennan Gripmesh cage feeder

3 HOOKLINK

12ins of 3lb fluorocarbon

4 HOOKBAIT

Breadflake/banded pellet, on a size 12 wide gape hook



Do you have any tips to make unhooking pike easy? I'm new to it all...

Ron Beach, Birmingham

A Let's start with the hooks. Many pike anglers used barbed ones, but I find semi-barbless just as effective. They have a barb on just one of the three trebles, which is hooked into the deadbait to secure it.

You could go one step further and use completely barbless hooks and, if you maintain tension while playing a fish, you won't lose it.

Another tip is to strike as soon as you get a solid indication. Don't wait, as they used to advise, because this increases the chance of deep hooking, which needs to be avoided at all costs!

Gary Knowles





PAUL GARNER

Angling Times columnist and bait expert



ADRIAN EVES

Seasoned specimen hunter with a string of big fish to his name



GARY KNOWLES

All-rounder and predator fishing ace



MARK POLLARD

England international and an expert on natural water fishing



TOM EDWARDS

Fenland-based fishing coach and commercial match ace



On big lakes, how many lines should I fish for bream?

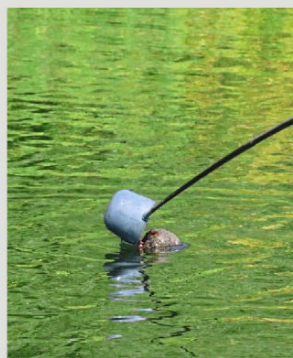
Mick Gatiss, email

A I'm not a fan of having two or three lines on the go on big waters, where bream can be very nomadic. They'll drift through your swim, so you have to be ready and waiting when they turn up – not fishing another line where there's nothing going on.

Having just the one line makes finding out what is happening much easier, as you are on it constantly and can take note of liners or fish rolling, and work out your bite times.

Rob Wootton

Should I 'ball in' groundbait when pole fishing on deep rivers?



Pete Yates, email

A On a deep river it's tempting to throw balls of groundbait in by hand, but cupping them in is far more accurate, and you can fish right on top of the feed.

Pack each ball hard so that nothing comes off as it falls through the water, lower the rig down and then, just as it settles, pull the float 12ins out of the water. This straightens the line.

Mark Pollard



Is it too late to target big gravel pit bream?

Chris Coyle, email

A Not at all – October and November can be two of the best months, because the fish will feed well ahead of winter and, with most of the natural food gone, they're more prone to eating anglers' baits.

Also, unlike in spring when the upper water layers are warmer than those near the lakebed, in autumn the layers near the bottom have a more stable temperature, so the bream are more predictable in their feeding.

Adrian Eves

When fishing the 'mud line', how tight over do I need to be?

Callum Evans, Droitwich

A Even if you get your rigs and feeding right, if you don't get the float close to any far-bank mud or cover, liners and foul-hooks will be a big problem.

That's because carp will happily swim between your float and the bank and into the line. I can't stress enough how important it is to have the float almost touching the bank! Of course, this depends on how deep the swim is here.

I'd want 12ins of water as a minimum so, if you haven't got that, move slowly out from the bank until you find it.

Tom Edwards



NOW TURN OVER THE PAGE FOR MORE MATCH FISHING WISDOM FROM CHAMPION ANGLERS JAMIE HUGHES AND STEVE RINGER

CHAMP'S DIARY

JAMIE HUGHES
GIVES
YOU THE
INSIDE LINE



A MIX OF EMOTIONS!

THIS week was all about the Maver Match This final, and when my daughter drew match peg 20, I was happy.

I'd won the practice match from match peg 11 with 186lb earlier in the week, when being negative with hard pellets on the deck had been the name of the game. I kicked off mugging and didn't catch anything for half-an-hour, and when I went on the deck with hard pellets, I put three in the net.

Others were catching more and so, needing to get back in the game, I tried the pellet waggler. That brought me another run of fish before the swim died.

With half the match gone, I decided to blast casters in and fish shallow. It worked a treat and, as the match progressed, the swim got stronger. I was catching both in amid the feed and mugging a few that were within eyeshot.

With minutes to go, I could see two carp and dropped my rig close by.

The float buried and a 4oz skimmer flew out of the water! That was my last fish of the day.

James Howarth fished a brilliant match to win the silverware and £45,000, while my bag was good enough for the runner-up slot and £4,000.

We both caught a late fish, and the difference was that James' was a 9lb carp! He's a great lad, and it was always a matter of 'when' and not 'if' he'd take out one of these big events.

The next day I was heading to Forest Lane Fisheries for the Fish North semi-final. The aim is to finish in the top half and secure a place in the final.

I started on meat and groundbait in the margins for an hour before fishing with casters shallow. The plan worked a treat, and I managed to win the match with 117lb – and qualify for the final into the bargain!



RINGER TO

CHAMPION ANGLER STEVE TAKES AN



What pole floats are best when fishing natural waters for silvers?

Dean Undercott, Enfield

T HIS is a great question, and I can guarantee that you're not the only one struggling with the issue. There are so many types of float on the market, and when you're after reasonably shy-biting species like roach and skimmers, it's important for you to make the right choice.

There are essentially three parts to this equation, and you need to analyse each before making your selection.

BODY SHAPE

There are three styles of body shape for natural water action, and they all have a

place in my armoury. The first is what I'd called a 'body down' shape, and this is the most stable of the three. It can 'dig in' well in difficult conditions, allowing you to hold the hookbait still without the body riding up and making bite detection poor if tow is proving problematic.

The best patterns tend to be made inline, in other words the line runs through the body of the float. The reason for this is that if the line passed around the body, there would be a good chance that the abrupt angle would cause damage to the float when changing depth.

Next up is the 'rugby ball' shape. This is the most popular type, as it's versatile and can be used in many situations. The elongated shape offers excellent stability, while also minimising resistance on the strike, both of which are important when targeting species like skimmers on natural waters.

Finally there are the slim, 'pencil-style' floats. There are two categories in this shape, and it's easiest to break them into two specific patterns.

The Guru Slim Maggot is brilliant for when you are laying your rig in and holding

TO THE RESCUE

**DO YOU
NEED RINGER'S
HELP?**

Send your question to:
askringer@anglingtimes.co.uk

IN-DEPTH LOOK AT YOUR ANGLING PROBLEMS



excellent when you are trying to catch on the drop, as the carbon stem follows the shot far better than wire stemmed floats do.

This is useful when you're trying to catch fish that are spread throughout the water column. Rigs incorporating carbon-stemmed floats are not prone to tangles, whereas whenever 'wrap-overs' occur while shipping in and out at speed, wire-stemmed floats are normally to blame.

Wire stems are great when stability is key and you need to hold a hookbait still. They will sit low in the roughest of conditions, whereas carbon ones can ride up.

BRISTLE CHOICE

The last, but certainly not the least important thing to consider, is bristle choice, and once again there are different options for different situations.

Hollow bristles are popular, as even in bad light they tend to be highly visible. They offer good buoyancy, too, and are perfect for bigger baits such as worms fished hard on the bottom, or when you are targeting skimmers and looking for lift bites.

Solid bristles work best when you need the most sensitivity. They are denser and less buoyant than their hollow counterparts, allowing you to spot the most subtle of indications.

The final option is the new kid on the block – fibreglass bristles. Being translucent, they glow under all light conditions and let you fish with a fine bristle than can still be read easily. These are the most sensitive of the lot, so if you feel you aren't seeing bites properly, switching to fibreglass might do the trick.

on to it while fishing for bites on the drop. It can also be used for fishing shallow with baits like maggots, casters and worm heads.

The second is the Guru Roach Slim, and this has an elongated body which is more suited to lowering a bait in over your bait.

Another big plus point is the float's lack of resistance on the strike, but the downside is that it isn't great in a big tow as it tends to ride up, hindering presentation.

STEM MATERIAL

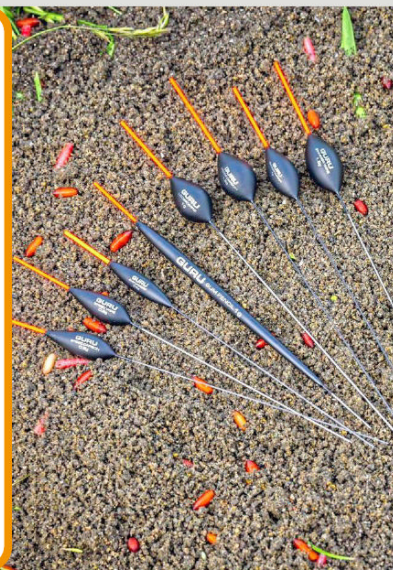
There are a few options on the market, but I keep it simple and work solely with carbon and wire. The former is

"All three styles of float body shape for natural water action have a place in my armoury"

3 STEPS TO SUCCESS

USE THE RIGHT SIZE

It is essential to have full control of your rig, so use a float heavy enough to allow you to do that in the prevailing conditions. Unless you're convinced that all the fish are on the deck, and you want to bomb the hookbait down quickly, use the lightest float possible in order to still maintain control of the rig.



DOT IT DOWN

Silverfish are renowned for being shy-biting, and if you have half a bristle on show, there's every chance you're going to miss subtle indications. Shot your float so that just a small pimple of the bristle is visible, to reduce the chances of you missing anything.



RELY ON BACKSHOT

One or two small shot on the line between the pole-tip and float will significantly reduce the number of bites missed. This is because the shot take out the slack, making sure you connect with the rig a split-second faster than before on the strike.





BAIT CLINIC DR PAUL GARNER

Honest advice to help you to catch more fish on every trip, without breaking the bank

THE PERFECT PAIRING WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

Catching summer barbel in low, clear rivers can be tricky, but fortunately there is one bait combination that has seemingly magical properties...

WITH steady feeding, hemp and caster can work barbel up into a feeding frenzy like no other bait combination. Although not cheap, it really is worth considering if your fishing time is limited.

The first thing to say is that because it can take time for these baits to work their magic it is essential that you are fishing a swim that

actually holds barbel. The fish will travel upstream, following a bait trail, but it's much better if a shoal is already in the immediate vicinity.

Regular light baiting is essential. These small baits mimic the natural invertebrate food of barbel, and a trail of small particles drifting downstream will encourage the fish to feed, even in the middle of the day.

If you can resist wetting a line, then the longer you can bait and wait before making your first cast, the better. This will give the fish time to settle and begin to feed confidently.

CASTER HOOKBAITS

A bunch of three casters can be carefully used on a strong size 12 hook, but recently I have been experimenting with some slightly different, and potentially more effective, hooking arrangements.

Modern fine boilie needles with a recessed barb allow casters to be carefully hair-rigged without destroying this fragile bait. The only problem with hair-rigging real casters is that small fish can easily crunch the bait and strip the hair. Keep a careful eye on the



Casters can be bulked up with hemp.

hookbait when you wind in and, if the bait is missing, then think about using a combination of real and artificial casters.

When feeding confidently barbel won't take the time to distinguish between a real caster and a fake one, so I'm happy to use rubber baits, which are much tougher and will last indefinitely. I like to hair-rig a fake caster and then use two real ones on the hook. Alternatively, by using a



Fresh casters should be a mix of dark and lighter colours.

"I like to hair-rig a fake caster and use two real ones on the hook"

Hemp and caster is a classic barbel bait combination.



barbed metal bait pin, I can top a real caster with a buoyant fake bait.

CLASSIC COMBO

While the price of casters can seem prohibitive, only a pint or two is needed when barbel fishing. Combining a pint of casters with anything up to eight pints of hemp cuts the cost massively, without impacting on catches.

QUICK TIP



ADD a sprinkling of sea or rock salt to your hemp to give it extra attraction.

HOW TO FILL THE FEEDER



Open up the holes on your swimfeeder to allow the casters to exit through them.



Pack some casters into the base of the feeder.



Finally, top up the swimfeeder with hemp.

Because the two baits are quite similar in size and colour, the fish don't worry about what they are eating – they just Hoover up both.

I still like to prepare my own hemp, cooking up a large panful and then freezing it in handy batches. Many tackle shops prepare hemp in bulk, so you can often pick up several kilos for a great price if you have the freezer space to store it.

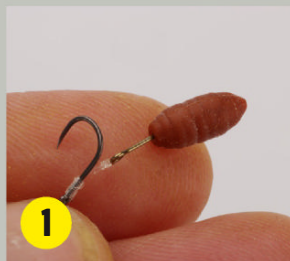
The only additive that I sometimes use with hemp is salt. This enhances the flavour, and it's attractive to fish in its own right.

REGULAR FEEDING

At close to medium range, a bait dropper is the ideal way to feed hemp and caster. I much prefer the accuracy of a dropper over loosefeeding in deeper swims, because I know exactly where the bait is hitting the bottom.

Remember that the current

REAL & FAKE CASTER COMBO



A metal bait pin gives a firm attachment to a rubber caster.



Push the pin into the centre of the fake bait.



Now add two real casters to the hook.

will wash baits some distance downstream, so always loosefeed well upstream of where you are fishing.

There is no more accurate way of feeding than by using a

HOW TO HAIR-RIG CASTERS



Use a fine recessed baiting needle to load up with casters.



Carefully hair-rig these delicate baits.

swimfeeder. The trickle of bait will wash down over the hookbait and away downstream. Many blockend feeders are furnished with quite small holes, so open these up to ensure casters can pass out of the feeder more easily. Pack the base of the feeder with some casters and then load up with hemp.

Make several casts with just the feeder attached before attaching a baited rig. An hour or more of feeding before you hook a fish can mean the difference between catching one barbel and catching the whole shoal.



These baits can be a game-changer for daytime barbel fishing.

NEXT WEEK

How to choose the right boilie for carp

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WHERE TO FISH

BRILLIANT BREAM SPORT AT WOODLAND

Triple-figure hauls of slabs are on the cards

OUR staff have been fortunate enough to enjoy some true red letter days while filming tackle tests over the years, and perhaps the best so far came during a recent session at Woodland Waters.

Tackle editor Mark Sawyer and his trusty sidekick Dan Webb were charged with running the rule over Daiwa's new SLR feeder rods – and while doing just that they experienced some top-class bream fishing at the Lincolnshire complex.

The venue is home to several waters, but it was the 14-acre Specimen Lake that served them up a treat, with the pair sharing a haul of well over 100lb of slabs.

While the fishing takes centre stage for many at the

complex near Grantham, it's also home to an array of luxury accommodation.

This is made up of wooden lodges nestled among the towering trees, a caravan touring site, a tackle shop, restaurant, bar, toilets and shower block.

BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

As the name suggests, the Specimen Lake is home to Woodland's biggest residents. Here you'll find carp and pike to over 25lb, perch to 3lb, roach to 2lb and bream over the 7lb mark.

Mark was confident of

getting a few bites in front of the lens, but the quality of sport far surpassed his expectations. He said: "We needed a lake where we could fish at long range and catch a quality fish or two, and while I never thought this place would let me down, I couldn't



Andy Jackson caught this double-figure pike from the Specimen Lake.



Mark Sawyer displays one of many quality bream landed.



Angling Times tackle tester Dan Webb with a 14lb common caught on feeder tactics.



You'll experience plenty of action in a stunning setting at Woodland Waters.

believe how good it was.

"I didn't put any bait in initially and thought I'd need to build the swim up a little before the fish turned up, but the first chuck ended with a 4lb bream going in the net!

"It was no fluke, and they kept on coming. Even when I stopped fishing for a while to do some filming, they were waiting upon my return.

"To catch so many fish in such stunning surroundings was a treat, to say the least."

MODERN METHODS

The lake is a firm favourite among carp anglers, who rely heavily on a blend of pellets and boilies to target their quarry. As a result, the bream are fully tuned into these baits, and a Hybrid feeder approach will outscore anything else.

Use a 12ft rod and aim to cast 45m-55m out into the zone where most of the food is introduced. Work with 6lb mainline, a 10lb shockleader and a 4ins hooklength of

0.19mm mono to a size 12 or 14 hook.

Pack a 40-50g feeder with dampened micro pellets and use a brightly coloured 6mm or 8mm wafter as hookbait.

VENUE FACTFILE

LOCATION: Woodland Waters, Willoughby Road, Ancaster, Grantham, Lincs, NG32 3RT

CONTACT: Call 01400 230888 or visit www.woodlandwaters.co.uk

PRICES: Adults £9 for two rods, concessions £7.50 or £11 and £9 for those carp fishing. Night fishing tickets also available

RULES: Barbless hooks only, under-16s must be accompanied, no pole fishing until October

FACILITIES: Parking, disabled access, tackle shop, restaurant, bar, toilets, accommodation



Pole tactics work well at Rycroft.

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STILLWATERS FOR A BAG OF BREAM

ESTHWAITE WATER, HAWKSHEAD, CUMBRIA

This scenic venue has been in great form this year. Feeder tactics with groundbait and lots of particles are hard to beat. Tel: 07553 316097

SOUTHFIELD RESERVOIR, DONCASTER, SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Bream anglers flock to this popular water each year. Fish lines at different ranges and ring the changes throughout the day. Contact: Independent Fishing Tackle and Bait, 01302 376689

HALLCROFT FISHERY, RETFORD, NOTTS

Good nets of skimmers and bream can be had here, with both Moat and Bridge Pools holding plenty of fish. Pole fished pellets are a good bet. Tel: 01777 719911

RYCROFT FISHERIES, HEMINGTON, DERBYSHIRE

Quality bream can be found in the Carp Lake and the Old Canal. Pole tactics score, and fishmeal groundbait is worth feeding. Tel: 07359 090991

RUDYARD LAKE, LEEK, STAFFORDSHIRE

Lots of bream to around 5lb are present. Try a cage feeder with dead maggot or worm hookbaits. Tel: 01538 306280

BLUEBELL LAKES, TANSOR, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Although famed for its big carp, there are some cracking bream at this venue, with fish well into double figures possible. Tel: 01832 226042

MEADOWLANDS FISHERY, COVENTRY, WARWICKSHIRE

Big bags of skimmers and bream can be had on both pole and feeder. Corn is a great hookbait. Tel: 07805 038645

SOUTHEND FARM, WALTHAM ABBEY, ESSEX

The Main Lake holds lots of fish to around 4lb. Pole tactics produce, and pellets are a good bait for singling out the bigger bream. Tel: 07950 012614

DURLEIGH RESERVOIR, BRIDGWATER, SOMERSET

Method feeder tactics are a winner here. Go for a wafter hookbait and use a bait-up feeder to build a swim. Tel: 01278 424786

MOTE PARK, MAIDSTONE, KENT

Bream to 7lb frequently fall to feeder tactics. Day tickets available in advance via the Maidstone Victoria AS website. Contact: www.maidstonevictoryanglingociety.com

EVEN FISH WITH BIG MOUTHS WILL DINE ON THE TINIEST OF NATURAL FOODS, AS DOM GARNETT DISCOVERS - P54

WHERE TO FISH EXTRA

RAMP UP THE ROACH ACTION FOR AUTUMN!

Visit one of these popular venues for plenty of action from this iconic species

PIPEHILL FISHERIES, LICHFIELD, STAFFORDSHIRE

Alder Lake is home to a large head of roach, and fish in the 8oz-1lb bracket are plentiful. Short pole tactics with casters is a winning formula, and a little-and-often feeding regime is recommended. Start by fishing on the bottom, trickling in a dozen freebies every minute, and shallow up if bites start to become hard to hit. Tel: 07976 528979

WOODSIDE FISHERY, CLEOBURY MORTIMER, SHROPSHIRE

Both Island and Woodside Pools are renowned for their fantastic autumn roach fishing, with 20lb netfuls commonplace. Aim to fish 8m out and have three rigs set up to cover various depths. String out your shotting to slow the fall of the hookbait, and fish to over 1lb will respond. Tel: 01299 271305

RIVER TRENT, NOTTINGHAM, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

The city centre Embankment by Nottingham Forest's stadium is a hotspot for roach, where both the waggler and stick float work well. Hemp, casters and maggots are the top three baits, and feeding each time you trot the rig through will gain a response. Get it right and a 20lb-30lb netful is on the cards. Tel: 0115 9140210

BODDINGTON RESERVOIR, DAVENTRY, NORTHANTS

Famed for its huge carp hauls, this giant reservoir is equally brilliant on the roach fishing front. The bigger fish have a taste for fishmeal and feeding a few balls of groundbait will draw their attention. Fish double caster over the top and you'll catch plenty in the 8oz-1lb bracket. Tel: 07815 534857



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WARWICKSHIRE AVON, EVESHAM, WORCESTERSHIRE

The Fladbury stretch is known for the species, and you can expect 15lb nets from this Birmingham AA-controlled zone. Long pole fishing is the name of the game, with the bigger roach typically falling to either maggot over groundbait or hemp and casters. Tel: 01562 882116

RIVER DON, DONCASTER, SOUTH YORKSHIRE

The stretch above Sprotbrough Weir is deep, and the roach love to pack into the area from autumn onwards. A long whip is a reliable way of getting bites, and putting down a small bed of groundbait before loosefeeding hemp and a few casters over the top is the best way to draw in and hold a shoal. Tel: 01709 862558

ALVECHURCH FISHERIES, BIRMINGHAM, WEST MIDLANDS

House Pool has produced some

enormous roach in recent years, and a 3lb-plus specimen was found during a netting survey. Worms and casters are brilliant baits, and fishing 10m-13m out into open water could help you locate a 2lb-plus beauty. Tel: 0121 4454274

IZAACK WALTON FISHERY, STAFFORD, STAFFORDSHIRE

The Bottom Pool is a favourite with silverfish anglers, and that's no surprise when you consider just how many 8oz-10oz roach it's home to. Feed small nuggets of groundbait to create a focal point, then a few casters little-and-often over the top. Be careful not to overdo it, or you'll draw the carp in. Tel: 07932 740121

SUMNERS PONDS, HORSHAM, WEST SUSSEX

The carp start to head for the cover of the island once temperatures begin to drop, leaving the roach to dominate the open water. Start at

Two lakes at Woodside Fishery have brilliant roach fishing potential.



6m on the deck with maggots and casters but be prepared to both shallow up and push a pole section further out once the fish start to become cagey.

Tel: 01403 732539

WHITMORE FISHERIES, PRESTON, LANCASHIRE

East Lake is a banker for big nets of autumn roach, with 30lb-40lb hauls caught every year at about this time. Fish 8m out with maggots and trickle 10 in each time you lay the rig in. Try to stick to that regime and you'll have a solid chance of keeping the fish concentrated on the deck in reasonably deep water.

Tel: 01253 836224

ROOKERY WATERS, PIDLEY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

This complex offers some stunning roach fishing, Rook being the pool to visit to make the most of your day out. Short pole tactics will keep the bites coming. Casters are a better bet than maggots

An enormous 3lb roach was discovered during a netting operation at Alvechurch Fisheries.



when trying to pick out plenty of 10oz-plus samples.

Tel: 01487 800120

STEWARTBY WATER, MARSTON MORETAIN, BEDFORDSHIRE

Feeder fishing is the best way to locate the big roach in this

enormous lake. Use a window packed with maggots, hemp, casters and a pinch of groundbait around 40m from the bank in the deep water, and roach to over 1lb 8oz will be your reward at this Stewartby WSC-controlled venue.

Tel: 01234 852530

HARESCOMBE FISHERIES, CHELTENHAM, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Light rigs are the key to fooling the biggest roach present in Field and Meadow Lakes. Use a slimline 4x10 or 4x12 float with a carbon stem, and string small shot along the bottom half of the mainline to help you catch on the drop. Complement this with regularly loosefeeding casters and you'll soon have fish to over 1lb queuing up.

Tel: 07966 520004

GREENWOOD FISHERIES, WARRINGTON, CHESHIRE

Kingfisher Lake is the bigger of the two here, where you'll find around 10ft of water on the long pole line. Start by cupping in two balls of groundbait laced with dead pinkies, casters and hemp and gauge the response. Loosefeeding with a catapult may be required to hold the shoal, but on some days topping up with a small nugget when bites dry up can be better.

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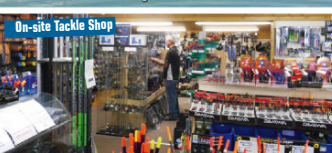
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OUR MAN ON THE BANK DES TAYLOR



A 75lb mirror carp from Rainbow Lake in France...



...or could it have been my first 100lb-plus carp?

"Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy? AI is to blame!"

THE other day I was watching on my computer a lion attacking an elephant – okay, that's not unheard of, but then I noticed it was an African lion having a go at an Indian elephant.

That didn't seem right, considering these creatures are from different continents, but then I realised it was AI at work again. I'm seeing more and more of this rubbish online, and I'm fast getting to the point where I don't believe anything!

I do worry about what AI is

going to do to our sport in the near future. Will *Angling Times* need to have a special anti-AI filter to check every fish that is entered into the Drennan Cup? And how about record fish claims?

You can see in my photos accompanying this article what AI can do. I could have asked for the carp to have been a 120lb world record, or that pike made to look 50lb – crazy days indeed!

And what about articles from chaps that have hardly ever fished, or never even held a rod, putting

information into AI about fish, and perhaps writing in the classic style of, say, Chris Yates? Out of the machine comes a lovely article, backed up by an array of photos of the chap fishing in delightful venues and holding some magnificent fish.

AI this would have you believe this chap is an expert angler and writer, yet what you have read is an utter load of airy-fairy rubbish.

I'm not even sure if there will be a place for anglers like me in future. Why pay me to go fishing, write articles and

take photos of beautiful destinations, when the editor of a magazine, with AI, could create an expert angler, complete with photos and fish? That, of course, is before AI gets rid of the editor too!

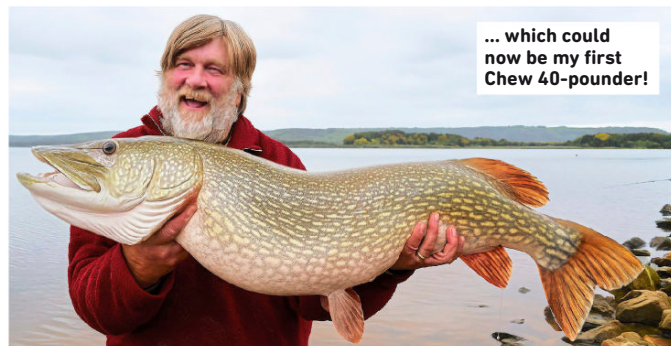
Don't get me wrong. Used correctly, AI can help us in many ways, obviously way beyond fishing. I, for one, will no doubt embrace it in the future, as at 70 years of age I have used social media to amass a Facebook group over 50,000 strong. I use it to help other anglers and inspire newcomers into our sport.

Even Facebook has to be controlled, or the wrong 'uns of this world will use AI to take trolling to a new level.

We must be strong enough to keep checks on it, and make laws and rules to keep our future in our own hands.



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1lb 2oz roach, River Lee, Enfield, North London, maggots



Ethan McManus

3lb common carp, Cockfield Green, West Suffolk, bread



Albies Wozny

120lb catfish, Orchard Place, Tonbridge, Kent, boilie

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Mylo Prescott

17lb mirror carp, Park View, York, North Yorkshire, pop-up



Arlu Berti

6lb ghost carp, Selsey, Surrey, sweetcorn



Hugo Latimer-Butler

11lb common carp, private lake, West Sussex, bread



Louie Liddle

Roach, undisclosed stillwater, France, pellet



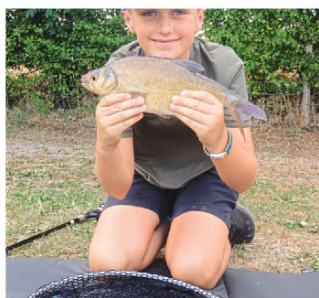
Danny Nolan

Bream, Rochford Reservoir, Essex, maggots



Dan Laws

5lb mirror, Angel of the North Fishing Lakes, Gateshead



Taylor Thornton

2lb bream, local pond, maggots



Tyler Jones & James Beeching

Common carp, Staunton Court, Gloucester



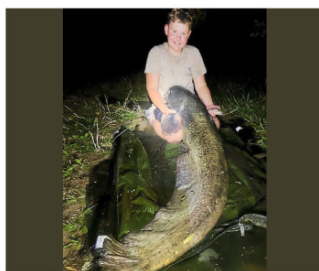
Miller Grogan

17lb common, Batchley Pond, Redditch, Worcs, wafter



Tom Cayley

28lb 4oz common, Whitevane Lake, West Sussex



Alfie Griffiths

52lb catfish, Great Linford Lakes, Bucks, chorizo



Joey Pinder

15lb 3oz pike, Basingstoke Canal, lure



Ava Johnson

Perch, local lake,
Staffordshire, maggots



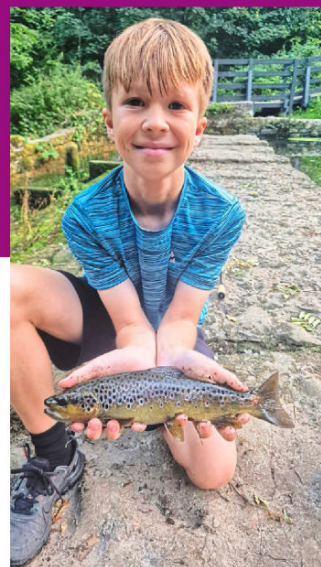
Harry Johnson

Roach, local lake,
Staffordshire, maggots



Olivia Sharpe

3lb 6oz mirror, village pond,
Roberttown, W Yorks, wafter



William Griffith

Brown trout, undisclosed
venue, Anglesey, bread



Connor Darby

4lb 12oz tench, Stanwick
Lakes, Northants, pellet



Fion Darby

5lb 12oz bream, Stanwick
Lakes, Northants, pellet



Joe Howells

30lb 2oz common carp,
private lake, lobworm



Casey Farmer

Barbel, River Wye,
Herefordshire



Wyatt Bishop

2lb 8oz bream, Cwmcelyn
Pond, Blaenau, Gwent



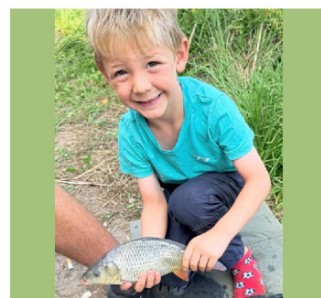
Adam Butautis

Pike, estate loch,
Aberdeenshire, deadbait



Cameron Daley

26lb 9oz common carp,
northern stillwater, bread



Albie Dumbrell

Common carp, Weeley,
Essex, maggots



Bluebelle Goodall

13lb 8oz common, Top Barn
Fishery, Worcestershire, boilie



Ryan Day

15lb 3oz mirror carp, Viaduct
Fishery, Somerset, pellet



Joshua Parnell

15lb 2oz barbel, Warwickshire
Avon, pellets



Madison Winstone-Wagerfield

8oz skimmer, Marlborough
Pool, Oxfordshire

MEET DEE DEE THE FISHERGIRL!

MY NIECE, Daisy (known as Dee Dee), caught herself this stunning 28lb mirror carp during a recent session at Hayton Lakes, in Nottingham.

Successful tactics were a little 10mm pink salted squid waffer, and she landed another carp of 18lb.

Dee is only seven years old, yet she has caught some monster fish.

She is proving to be a great all-round fishergirl!

The fight from the big mirror took her all round the lake and under her dad's rods, while it stripped line off her reel. But she kept calm and collected, and eventually had it in the net.

Ben Wardle, email



Dee Dee with her cracking 28lb mirror.

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

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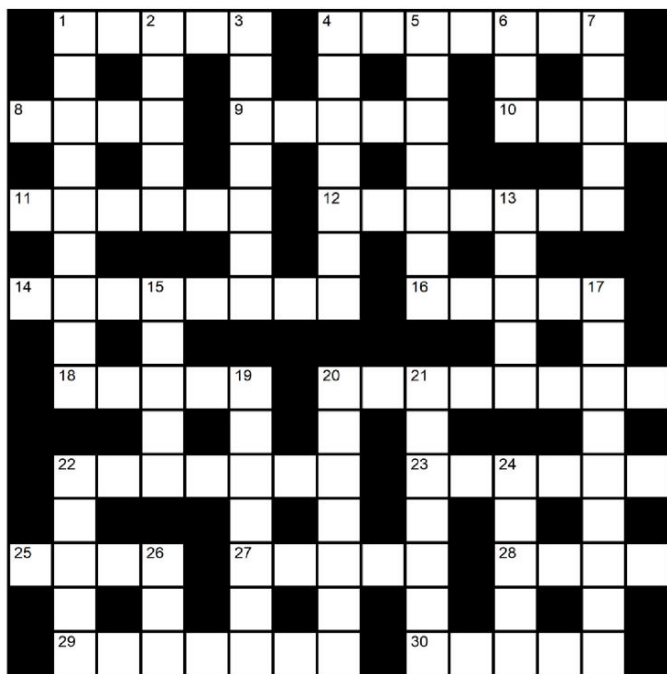
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THE ANGLER'S CROSSWORD



(* indicates an anagram)

ACROSS

1 Tackle company, sponsor of e.g.

'Mega Match This' (5)

4 Embryo's Carp Arena is in this country (*big mule) (7)

8/26dn. Describes a capless swimfeeder (4,3)

9 Sleeve used to join e.g. line and swivel (5)

10 Tiny Channel Island... helps to make

fishermen! (4)

11 ___ Island is in Blackwater/Colne

estuaries (*see ram) (6)

12 Applies e.g. lube (7)

14 The rings at rod joints (8)

16 An anti-eject, pillow-shaped boilie (5)

18 Shell-less snails, brilliant chub bait (5)

20 Mike ___ finalist in Golden Reel 2022/
Maver Match This 2023 (8)

22 Small fry (7)

23 Preston's river flowing to the Irish Sea (6)

25 e.g. hook or trace material (4)

27 e.g. Angling Trust 'Anglers against
Pollution' emblem (5)

28 Drake is a male one (4)

29 Small barbel-like fish with only two
feelers (7)

30 Matt ___ and Mick Brown of Ultimate Rod
Race 2025 (5)

DOWN

1 Large particle bait, they're great for tench
(5,4)

2 Another name for 'lips' on crankbaits (5)

3 Shipping forecast area off NW Scotland
(*all cork) (7)

4 Oval, 51-peg lake at East Bilney Fishery
(*e.g. birds) (7)

5 Lacking a vane, like a floating plug (7)

6 Parasite causing white spot disease - in
Lichfield! (3)

7 Ivan ___, 'People's Champion' angler,
1970-80s (5)

13 Narrow racing boat/spoon-bladed oar (5)

15 Common shape of split-shot (5)

17 Fish O'Mania champion 2025 and
youngest-ever winner (*dub rascal) (4,5)

19 Such boilies quickly dissolve in water (7)

20 Kieran ___, in Golden Reel Grand Final
2025 (7)

21 Market town on River Wansbeck
(*rot hemp) (7)

22 Herts. reservoir complex, largest is
Wilstone (5)

24 It's a sea-fishing beach shelter, mate! (5)

26 See 8ac.

Solutions to September 9, 2025 crossword

Across: 1 Shallow 5 Couch's 8 Megrim 9 Flotsam 10 Disc 12 Brent 13 Tope 14 Spongy
16 St Neots 18 Pole cup 21 Hooked 22 Dene 24 Steel 25 Dobs 27 Ferries 28 Barbel
30 Python 31 Dot spod.

Down: 1 Spec 2 Air 3 Lyme Bay 4 Wafers 5 Croston 6 Upset 7 Hemp paste 11 Canal
15 Popper fry 17 Ovoid 19 Cassien 20 Pressed 21 Halibut 23 Earth 26 Bread 29 Rip.

'RYEMEADS ROACH BOOM', 1975

ROACH MILLIONS JOIN THE EFFLUENT SOCIETY

A sight to gladden the eyes of any fish-starved angler... and these roach from Rye Meads have populated the lagoons without any outside interference.



A SEWAGE farm in Hertfordshire has become the spawning ground for countless thousands of roach — fish that not only tolerate living in undiluted effluent, but actively thrive in it.

Tony Dearsley, a research student at London University's Chelsea College, has investigated the fish population at Rye Meads, near Hoddesdon — a sewage purification works that treats waste from the Middle Lee Valley. And he finds that certain points in the plant. What's more, these fish have a growth rate up to three times faster than normal.

It's an exciting discovery, for the roach are apparently healthy enough to use for restocking other waters. Rye Meads has effectively become an accidental coarse fish farm — with no running costs!

But nothing is that simple, and Tony points out that the Hertfordshire works are by no means typical of sewage farms as a whole.

In a paper recently read to the British Ecological Society, he stressed that the presence of so many fish at Rye Meads is due to the particular way the sewage is treated. The works are the most advanced in the country, and parts of the site resemble gravel pits. Cormorants, ducks and moorhens all add to the illusion.

Treatment of the raw sewage is in three stages. After it is separated into liquid and solid material, the liquid is treated with activated sludge, and bacteria break down the effluent. Then it is pumped into tanks and allowed to settle — the secondary

River Lee just below its confluence with the Stort.

Fish are present in the system even at the secondary stage, and Tony has seen roach spawning in the overflow channels round the settling tanks.

In the lagoons themselves, there is a staggering population of roach, plus some perch, dace and chub. Nobody is sure how they got there, but it only needs one sweep of a seine net to convince the sceptics. Out of a seine net in their thousands, fish ranging from an ounce apiece to well over the pound.

There is clear evidence that the roach breed in the lagoons to provide a steady stream of fry that populate the outfall channels and eventually find their way into the Lee.

And roach are not the only species found in these channels. A sample taken from a 50-yard stretch last summer included chub, perch, bream, dace, pike, gudgeon, sticklebacks, bleak and minnows.

Carp have been introduced into some of the lagoons by biologist Reg Noble, and he has found they grow fat on the effluent. There is even the possibility that these fish could eventually find their way to the table.

But Tony Dearsley again stressed that Rye Meads effluent was of unusually high quality: "Fish reared in effluents from highly industrialised areas tend to accumulate substances like heavy metals and pesticides — and might not be suitable for human consumption," he said.

For the moment, however, it's our guess that the many pairs of greedy eyes turned in the direction of Rye Meads have plans for the fish quite unconnected with the cooking pot.



ARTHUR'S ARCHIVE

Keith looks at historical sewage levels in UK rivers, and their effect on angling...

I'M NOT usually one to court controversy, but this week I'm making an exception.

Since people were exposed to the countryside courtesy of Covid, when all they could do was go for a walk (or go fishing, even), there has been a furore about sewage 'pumping' into rivers. People are speaking as if this was a new thing!

Miles more untreated, but highly diluted, sewage was going into rivers before the Big Clean Up in the early 1990s that changed the way our rivers functioned. Remember

'The Day the Trent Died' and other associated *Angling Times* headlines? The clear water that resulted on the Trent led to a decline in match results and attendances, and a huge increase in specialist angling, especially barbel fishing.

So, where did the roach go? Obviously they didn't all go, because those specialist anglers would regularly have them as bycatch. They were replaced largely by dace, more at home in cleaner, clear water.

Although I have nothing scientific to offer about this tale, I have many examples as

evidence... and here's one of them from an archive 15 years before this cycle ever began.

Rye Meads Lagoons, part of a sewage works in what was then a revolutionary treatment process, was found to be home to a lot of roach. These fish hadn't been stocked, but had probably made their way up from the nearby River Lea, into which the fully treated sewage was released.

The roach were obviously breeding in there, and not only surviving in the partially-treated effluent, but actually thriving and flourishing.

So, as has been my theory for many years... was the improvement in quality of effluent responsible for the decline in roach sport, and will the current addition of untreated sewage improve it in years to come?

On the Thames, 20lb-plus bags of roach were not unusual in the 1970s, but were replaced by similar bags of dace in the 1980s and 1990s. Now, although there's no real shortage of dace, the roach are making a comeback. A pal of mine landed 19, half of them 1lb-plus, in a short recent session on bread.

It does bear thinking about, doesn't it?

WHAT ELSE WAS HAPPENING

TOP OF THE POPS

Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* is released, as the lead single on the album *A Night at the Opera*. It remains the third best-selling single of all time, behind only *Candle in the Wind* (Elton John, 1997) and *Do they Know it's Christmas?* (Band Aid, 1984).

COMEDY CLASSICS

The first episode of the sitcom *Fawlty Towers* airs on BBC2. Despite its popularity, it will only run for 12 episodes, all told. On the big screen, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* is released in cinemas.

CAR WARS

Vauxhall launches the Cavalier (below), to replace the Victor, as a direct competitor to the popular Ford Cortina. Other manufacturers follow suit, among them Chrysler UK, which launches a five-door hatchback called the Alpine.



"The roach were not only surviving in the partially-treated effluent, but actually thriving and flourishing"



LAST CAST WITH DOM

DOM GARNETT – ONE MAN DETERMINED TO KEEP THE PLEASURE IN ANGLING

Even 'big mouths' like chub and carp will often feed on tiny morsels!



"Some fish choose to feed on things we can barely see"

THE crazily low, clear conditions that dominated summer 2025 provided some fascinating, if frustrating, lessons in my angling.

When there are only inches of water, or near-perfect clarity, you find out a lot about your quarry, and just how subtle or otherwise your approach is.

Beyond crouching down and moving slower than a heron with arthritis, there is little I can do about being 6ft 5ins tall, with big feet.

With presentation, however, it's a different story. There are endless possible refinements, and definitely times when the fish don't want a big or conspicuous bait.

One thing that so often

stands out a mile when you study fish up close is just how cutely they feed. The things they actually eat, as opposed to what we throw at them, are so often incredibly tiny!

A typical midge larva isn't much bigger than a size 20 hook, and yet even large fish like carp will gorge themselves on such fodder.

There are certainly times when we're biteless, even when the fish look eminently catchable, and certain scenarios crop up again and again. Mullet and trout, in particular, can be absolute horrors when they choose to feed on things we can barely see, but I've also been caught out by tench and bream that provide rafts of bubbles but few, if any, tangible bites.

So where do we go when nothing seems to work? While our instinct might be to 'go big or go home', as the saying goes, the opposite approach makes more sense for fish feeding as nature intended.

A couple of pinkies on a tiny hook might just fool those silt digging tench, just as the smallest Black Gnat in your fly box might be needed for hook-shy trout and grayling.

Perhaps the most untested tactic of all for coarse fish is to do some additional detective work and use real, natural food items or close copies.

It's something you inevitably become curious about if you do any fly fishing – especially if you ever take a trout for the table. Take a look down the gullet, and the scale of



Buzzers are a staple food item for many fish species.

some of the insects is jaw-droppingly tiny.

Don't be fooled into thinking these rules only apply to 'game' fish either, because the menu is often very similar for your favourite coarse species.

I've had plenty of carp on ridiculously small bloodworm copies, even in muddy water.

This coming winter I'm tempted to harvest some real freshwater shrimps for rock hard chalk stream grayling.

'Give the fish what they trust' is the message here. Now, where did I put that magnifying glass?

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